Rohan Chandra Roy

TOWARDS
A PROSPEROUS
INDIA

Born 1 July 1882 Died 1 July 1962

Bidhan Chandra Roy

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A PROSPEROUS INDIA

Speeches and Writings of

Bidhan Chandra Roy

CALCUTTA
The First of July 1964

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By PULINBIHARI SEN
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Preface

WHEN Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy passed away two years ago, his grateful countrymen thought of perpetuating in many ways the memory of one who had become to them a symbol of stability and progress. The Memorial Committee, appointed soon after his death, decided to build a hospital and similar other institutions for children. Many other institutions were also founded in his memory, a very notable one being the school set up after his name by Krittibas who was his personal attendant for forty years. And now the Medical Council of India has announced six national awards for outstanding achievements in Medicine, Science, Statesmanship, Literature, Philosophy and Art, on the lines of the Nobel Prize, and a memorial hall in New Delhi.

This volume is the outcome of one of such memorial schemes, sponsored by the Government of West Bengal. How Dr Roy piloted the ship of the State through troublous waters during the period 1948 to 1962 is still vivid in our memory ; but his service to his countrymen is not confined to these fourteen years only.

His public career may in a sense be said to have started with his association with Calcutta University, of which he was elected a Fellow in 1916, and later he became its President of the Board of Accounts, and, in 1942, its Vice-Chancellor. He became progressively known and loved as the founder-promoter of many an institution for the healing of the sick ; as a Member of the Bengal Legislative Council under the leadership of Deshabandhu Chittaranjan and, after his death, as the Deputy Leader of the Swarajya Party ; as an Alderman of the Corporation of Calcutta for many terms and as the Mayor of Calcutta for two terms ; as the General Secretary of the Reception Committee of the Indian National Congress in 1928, as the President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, and as a member of the Congress

Working Committee, in which capacity he courted imprisonment in 1930.

It was thought necessary that a record of his many-sided career, as expressed through his speeches and writings, should be preserved and for this purpose the Government of West Bengal appointed a Board of Editors.

The Board, after preliminary planning, entrusted the work of compiling and editing the material to Sri Pulinbihari Sen and in this he was assisted by Sri Dipendranath Mitra and Sri Haripada Mukhopadhyaya.

The Board of Editors wish to record their gratefulness to the Government of West Bengal, whose support has made this volume possible, and to the Chief Minister of West Bengal especially, who took a keen interest in the work when it was in progress. Our grateful thanks are also due to the authorities of different institutions who made available to us material for inclusion in this volume, and to every one of our numerous friends who have helped us in many ways.

On the eighty-second anniversary of Dr Roy's birth, which is also the second anniversary of his death, the outcome of the efforts of the Board is presented to his countrymen in the hope that this will help them remember his magnificent contribution in building up a Prosperous India.

1 July 1964

ATULYA GHOSH

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Illustrations

Acknowledgements

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TOWARDS A PROSPEROUS INDIA

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL

Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy was a man of action and was not inclined, temperamentally, to talk about himself. Towards the closing years of his life, his grateful countrymen used to accord him birthday receptions, and it was on these occasions that he would sometimes speak about himself, even introspectively. In this section have been gleaned some passages from such birthday talks.

Birthday Musings

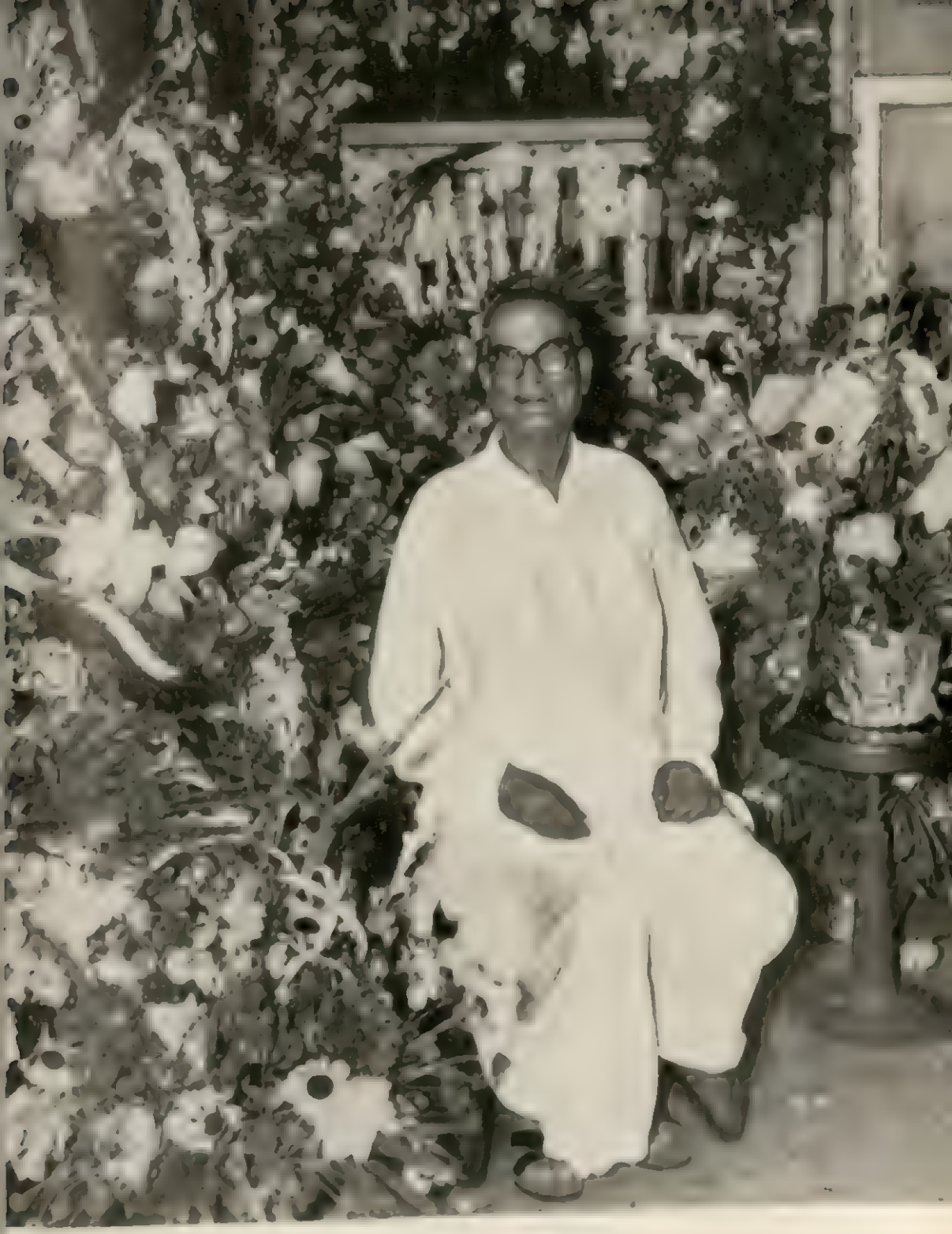
I HAVE often found myself reflecting on the significance of the tributes paid to me on my birthday. I have wondered if they are paid to me in such profusion merely because I happen to be the Chief Minister of this state. Or should they be regarded as tokens of the public's sincere sentiments towards me, representing their appreciation of my services, however humble, to my country and my people. If I took them as mere formalities, like so many other formalities, connected with the office of the Chief Minister and required by convention to be paid to him, I would not attach much value or importance to them ; I would then only accept them formally, without much emotion. But from the way they are paid to me and the way people behave towards me, I get the impression that they are not just such conventional gestures. I believe they reveal the people's, at least of a large section of the people's, affection towards me, their trust in me.

Believing this as I do, these birthday tributes are to me matters of great gratification and significance. They affect me deeply and in various ways. They remind me emphatically of my great responsibilities, of my obligations and duties to the people. This has the effect of goading me to work harder and harder, of urging me to devote all my energies, all my faculties to the great tasks we have set ourselves to accomplish, the tasks of freeing our country from the pressure of poverty and ignorance. They induce in me, at the same time, a sense of deep humility and a feeling of awkwardness. For when I see the problems and difficulties ahead of us, I cannot but be acutely conscious of my very limited capacities with which I have to face and tackle them. I then suffer from an uncomfortable feeling that I am not equal to the tasks, that people have put exaggerated faith in my abilities, that I have been assumed to have qualities which I do not really possess, or possess in a very limited capacity. I have no doubt

that my services in the past are also given undue importance; my personal contributions as public worker are rated too high.

When we are fond of a person, when we love him and trust him, we are prone to over-estimate his abilities. I flatter myself that the people in general, for similar reasons, have too high a opinion of my personal abilities and attainments. This, as I have just said, gives rise to doubts whether it is for the right reasons that I have been chosen to be one of the national leaders, whether I have the right qualities to be one. But, then, whenever I have been assailed by such doubts, I have received strength and courage from the consideration that nothing is perhaps more essential for me to accomplish the type of work entrusted to me than to have the confidence and love of the people. And these I appear to enjoy, and so long as I continue to enjoy them, I need not let such doubts worry me. For the choice of serving the people hardly rests with me; I have been given this unique opportunity and I must do my very best. This is what I have resolved to do and have been doing. I am sure, with your co-operation and best wishes we are advancing steadily in the right direction, and no obstacles however formidable they may appear to us at the beginning, can stop our progress if we work hard with all sincerity and devotion.

Although I have for many many years been taking part in public activities, I have never had any aspiration for power or position in the sphere of public affairs or, for that matter, in any other sphere. I am not an ambitious person. If I have some position of importance in public life that is not because I made any efforts to gain it, nor is that because I have got any superior virtues or outstanding abilities. I wonder how I have come to have it! Why should I have been chosen for so responsible an office! During my school days and early age, I did not show any promise of ever achieving eminence in any field, nor did I have any such secret longing. I was not born with any special gifts and was in every respect a very ordinary student. I did not work hard at school, did not mind, like so many other boys, playing truant occasionally, never expected to do well at examinations, and was quite happy when I just passed in one. Nobody thought I was in any way a talented boy. As we know, there have



On his birthday

been men who, from their very early age, sensed that they were destined to achieve something important, to become somebody great—a leader of a people, a great reformer, a creative writer, an artist or a scientist. I have never felt any such sense of destiny. Even my becoming a doctor was not the result, as I have heard being said, of any long-cherished desire on my part to enter the medical profession in order to be able to serve my suffering countrymen. As a matter of fact, when, on getting my B.A. degree, I had to choose a professional career, I had only a vague notion, as so many young men have these days, that I would rather be a doctor or an engineer. Beyond that I had no other aspirations at that time. And I went in for medicine, and not engineering, merely because the offer to get me admitted to the Calcutta Medical College reached me earlier than the other offer to get me admitted for training in engineering.

It was, however, very fortunate, some people may even say 'providential', that I entered the medical profession. For it was when I started practising that I first came in direct contact with the real sufferings of our people, their poverty and their want. I was profoundly moved by what I saw, and thus the supreme necessity of helping and guiding them was brought home to me. I felt an intense urge, an inner compulsion to do everything in my power to help them, to fight for them, to devote my life to their service. This has ever since been the central purpose, the guiding passion of my life. It is this that brought me into public life, and then, gradually and inevitably, into politics, which, as such, has no attraction for me.

I believe sincerely that in all my public actions I have always been true to this central idea, I have been driven to work keeping this aim in view. In the course of my rather long life, I have taken part in many spheres and fields of public activities. I have worked and fought for various movements, causes and undertakings. Sometimes I have played a very humble role, at other times rather an important one ; but whatever the work that has been my share to do, I have always tried to do it with the best of my ability. I derive great satisfaction from this. When I was a student at the Calcutta Medical College, there was a board there, bearing the adage: "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." This principle tallied with my outlook and temperament completely. I have ever since tried to put this into practice in my own life, along with

another maxim: "Do not put off till tomorrow what you can do today." When a job, whether it is generally regarded as important or not, falls to my lot to do or is assigned to me, it assumes importance immediately so far as I am concerned; and I cannot rest till it is completed. I believe that such services as I have succeeded in rendering to the nation and such as have received the appreciation of the people are due mainly to this attitude and outlook of mine with regard to work.

I invite you all to resolve today to bear in mind constantly these two maxims and put them into effect in your own lives. A resolution like this would be the most valuable gift ever presented to me on my birthday. If we all do that we will bring about a revolution in our society and we will move fast and smoothly towards the great goals we are aiming to reach.

I am deeply thankful that I am well enough again to meet you today and work among you. During my recent illness, the doctors who attended me feared that I would never get back my previous strength, and that I might have to retire from public life altogether. At first, like others, I also lost faith in the possibility of my complete recovery; and I felt utterly depressed, thinking that I would prefer death to the agony of having to live a life of forced inactivity. I must have been in this state of hopelessness for a few days before it occurred to me that as long as my services were necessary, the Almighty will keep me alive and active, and I need have no fear. Thus, I regained faith, and, as soon as I was on my way to recovery, I resumed work with courage. I knew my doctors were not happy about this. They were surprised that, even though I was a doctor myself, I did not sufficiently realize the seriousness and gravity of the risks I was running in not taking enough rest. They thought I was being unreasonable and stubborn. But I looked at the situation from a different angle. I took it that, in response to my prayer, I was granted a new lease of life to devote it entirely to the service of my country, and I regarded it as my duty not to while away, if possible, a single day of it. I must do my utmost, I felt, to make the best use of the remaining few years of my life, and it was not for me to worry about such consequences as I would as a mere physician. I would also request you not to worry about my health.

In every advanced religion of the world, serving one's fellow-beings is regarded as a supreme task, a sacred duty; and I consider it to be what may be called my personal religion. Such work is an absolute necessity of my being. Whether I work through the Government, as I am doing now, or from outside, whether through this organization or that, the fact is that I am wedded to the public life of this country. I have most of my life been deeply engaged in the affairs and service of the people, and it is in public activity, in public life that I have found the joy of living, the reason for my existence. It is mostly in this sphere that the things I really take an interest in are located. I would not say that I have sacrificed anything in adopting this way of life. For if I had to forgo something in the material and personal sphere, that has been more than compensated by spiritual gains.

I am not a political philosopher. I do not know what is democracy or what is socialism. I am interested only in knowing how we can serve our people better and more efficiently. If I joined the Congress party and have worked through it, that is because it grew out of and symbolized the collective desire of millions of our countrymen to serve our country. It is through such an organization, they found, that the country could be best served. So, it is but natural that I joined the Congress party. If I thought that I would be able to work more effectively through some other organization, I would certainly do so. I do not ask anybody to come forward and work through any particular party or organization. Your conscience would be the best judge as to whether what you do is for the good of the country and the people in general or it serves some narrow and selfish ends. If we follow the verdict of our conscience, if we listen to her judgements and direct our activities accordingly, we are not likely to stray from the path of truth. We have only to be sincere to ourselves and work hard.

We Bengalis are, on the whole, an emotional people. When I say this I mean that in our individual as well as collective life we are inclined to be guided more by emotions and feelings than by rational thinking. Because of this trait in our character, we have certain fine qualities, certain

virtues, of which we may well be proud. But we also suffer, because of this, from certain disadvantages and weaknesses, particularly when, in this troubled age, we find ourselves amid the grim struggle for existence.

When something—a cause, a movement or an incident—appeals to our heart, when something moves our feeling, we are capable of performing for it, if so necessary, acts of great sacrifice and bravery. That no doubt is the reason why, during the prolonged struggle of our country for political independence from foreign subjugation, thousands among us responded so promptly to the call of the nation, and did not hesitate to make the supreme sacrifice. It may not be an exaggeration to say that it is mainly from Bengal that the patriotic fervour of *Bande Mataram*, spread to the rest of India. Then, if our language and literature are so advanced, if we are so responsive to the arts and they have so important a place in our life, that also, I think, is due to this emotional bent in our character.

We are going through hard times, struggling for our very existence. The problems and difficulties we are facing are huge and baffling. In a situation like this, mere feeling for our suffering compatriots, however genuine and profound, and emotional enthusiasm to do something great for them, cannot be relied upon to guide us. It is absolutely essential, in such circumstances, to meet the situation calmly and try to understand it in all its aspects. We have to study our problems and difficulties in a scientific manner, from all possible angles, and then proceed to make plans and schemes for their solution. If we are too ambitious and forget what is practicable, if in our over-zealousness we try to achieve all at once, we are likely to experience great disappointments and feel frustrated. Therefore, we must look out carefully before we leap. We must be objective in our approach. We must not let ourselves be swayed by emotions.

But I do not say that emotions and feelings have no place here. On the other hand, they have a very important role to play in our struggle for progress and prosperity. For it is from them that the inspired urge to act should come. Unless we are deeply moved by what we see, unless we feel the sufferings others undergo, we can never have that urge to work for the greater good of all. This is not the time to think only of our

personal successes, of our individual well-being only, of this group or that. We must do our very best for the whole nation and the community, devote all our powers to the service of the people. Nothing less than that is demanded of us all, and let us respond to the call whole-heartedly. On us depends the entire future of the new Bengal, which has been so hard hit recently and is now struggling to recover its previous position of leading our whole country again. We must not forget for a moment that what status in the whole of India we are going to attain in the very near future will be the result of what we are doing today. We have the ability and if, with faith in our future, we exert ourselves with determination, nothing, I am sure, no obstacles, however formidable or insurmountable they may appear at present, can stop our progress. Our future is bright and we have no cause to despair, if we all work unitedly keeping our vision clear and have a firm grasp of our problems.

We have been hearing of late quite a good deal about the necessity of 'peaceful co-existence' in the field of international relations. This phrase may be new, but the principle, the motto it stands for—live and let live—has been preached by the wise men of all ages, in our country and elsewhere. We cannot pretend though that, at any time in the past, this sane counsel received much recognition in the realm of international affairs. However, as a result of certain scientific discoveries, together with the gradual development of some political, economic and social factors, mankind as a whole now finds itself in a critical situation. The very existence of the human race is threatened if the various peoples and nations, particularly the big powers, with their different political systems, their diverse and conflicting aspirations and interests, do not learn to live together in peace and in harmony. The spread of the movement for 'peaceful co-existence' indicates that the gravity of the situation is being realized by more and more people. There is no doubt that those who control the big powers are already alive to the fact that in their hands lies the future of mankind. Our country is of course doing its best to support the growth and spread of this spirit of 'peaceful co-existence', deeply inspired as our foreign policy is by Mahatma Gandhi's ideals of peace and non-violence.

It is no less important for us to follow this principle of peace and understanding in our internal affairs, in our inter-state relations. I am quite sure that, if the political freedom that we have earned after such prolonged struggle is to be consolidated and established on a sound economic foundation, we must first of all realize that the well-being of a region or a state is ultimately and inescapably dependent on, and a part of, our national well-being. That is why there cannot be any fundamental conflict between the interests of one state or region with those of another. Whether we are Assamese or Biharis or Bengalis we must see that it is quite futile and wrong to expect to prosper at the cost of our neighbours. Our prosperity and well-being are inter-dependent. It is most unfortunate that some of us have sometimes failed to see this most important point, and as a result quite unnecessary frictions have, now and then, arisen between one state and another. I myself have not the slightest doubt that the problems that have given rise to such frictions and misunderstandings are capable of easy solution if we would only stop to look at them from some mere parochial point of view and start judging them from the larger angle of vision of the whole nation. Mutual realization of each other's problems and to work together peacefully with an appreciation of our common objectives are absolutely essential if we are to advance satisfactorily in our economic, social and political life.

To do this, to develop such an outlook, to be able to look at a problem from a wider angle is easy for those who have the opportunity and take the advantage of associating intimately with people of their neighbouring states. I can say this from my personal experience. I was born in Patna, in Bihar, and lived and had my education there till I was about twenty. I have also lived in Assam for some time and I have there some of my most intimate friends. And, of course, I have spent about fifty years of my life in Bengal. I, therefore, consider myself belonging to all these three states. I am proud of the fact that I am what I am because I have lived with and known the people of all these three states almost equally well. And because of this, I suppose, it is perhaps easy for me to see and appreciate that there are no real grounds or fundamental causes for most of these conflicts; they merely appear to be so to those who, I think, have a very superficial sense of concern of their own community and its interests. I will, therefore,

ask all those from other states who are living and are settled in West Bengal to cultivate the company and friendship of their Bengali neighbours and know them as well as they know their own people. Similarly, my advice to the Bengalis living in other states, in Assam, in Bihar, in Orissa, is to mix with and know their non-Bengali neighbours as intimately as they do their own people. The understanding and appreciation that develop from such social contacts are the best way of removing these inter-state differences. They will also make our social life richer and more interesting. Such contacts are no doubt developing fast as commerce and industry are developing. I hope we will soon see the beneficial results of such contacts.

1952-61

TRIBUTES

During his long career, Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy came to know closely many of Modern India's leaders in thought and action, and he has left written accounts of his impressions of some of them. Instinct with personal memory of close collaboration in the service of the Motherland, these tributes are of considerable interest to those who wish to have an intimate view of these eminent sons of India.

Dr Roy's tribute to his leader, Deshabandhu, finds living embodiment in the Chittaranjan Seva-Sadan, of which he was the chief architect ; and to the memory of Rabindranath he built a centre for the study of the poet's life and work—the Rabindra-Bharati University.

Mahatma Gandhi

WHAT is known as Gandhian creed is the declaration of his faith in the principles of Non-Violence and Truth. All his teachings to his followers, viz., Removal of Untouchability, Hindu-Muslim Unity or the use of Khadi, flow from this fundamental creed.

Gandhiji believed in this fundamental concept that in our lives—whether individual or collective—the principles of Truth and Non-Violence should be the predominant operative factors. Let us analyse what these two principles are. Are they two distinct principles or do they merge into one? Whatever is Non-Violent is True and whatever is True is Non-Violent. How do we arrive at this conclusion? In our daily lives we meet with situations or incidents where conflicts of ideas, ideals or actions occur. The way to solve these problems or conflicts should be through Non-Violence. This means that there should be no attempt to use force to crush the opponent's point of view, or subdue the enemy, but to consider calmly arguments in support of his view and find out whether they conform to what, in the opinion of the individual, is true and honest. If that be done, one should, according to this creed, find a reply to the opponent's arguments or counteract his actions without using force to coerce or crush the opponent. On the other hand, when one meets with danger or opposition, unwillingness to face it would indicate an attempt at 'escapism'. If we meet a danger and run away from it, or if we meet an opponent and avoid facing him, then Gandhiji would call it 'Non-Violence of the weak'.

It is essential, therefore, for a votary of this creed to boldly face the opponents in a non-violent spirit. If the results that follow out of this conflict are not in favour of the person who follows the creed of Non-Violence, it does not matter. The issue of the conflict is really not of fundamental import. It might go against him. He might even lose the game. He might find the views of the opponent to be too strong for him. And,

yet, it is better to have 'tried and failed' than never to have tried at all. The opponent or the hostile situation must be faced in a spirit of Non-Violence.

Karmaṇyebādhikāraste mā phaleṣu kadācana

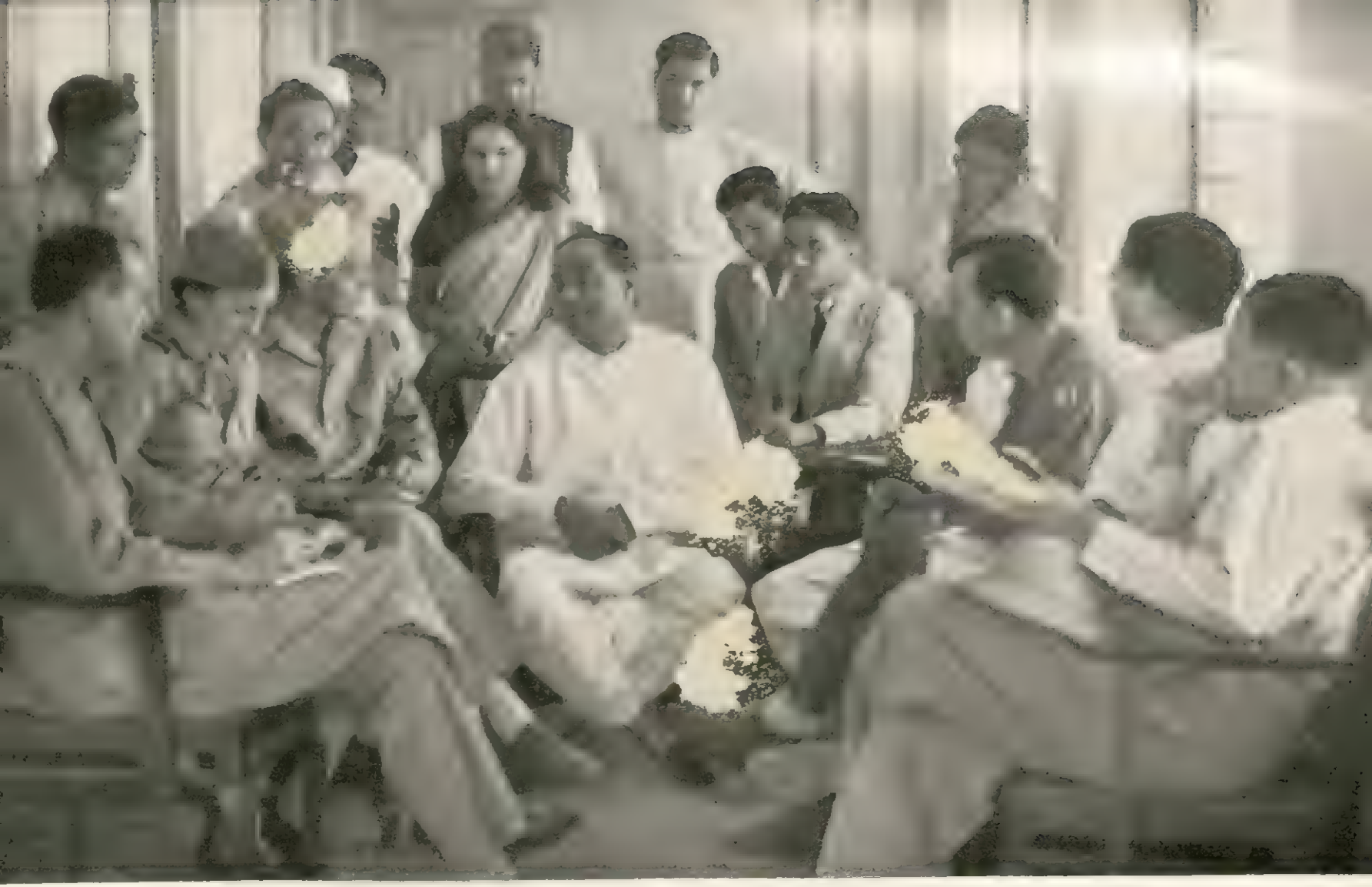
says the Śāstras. 'We human beings can only have the privilege of working our hardest: the results lie in God's hands'. Gandhiji also maintained that ends never justify the means. We, men of the world, usually follow the opposite course. We set our heart on the end; we utilize every means, fair or foul, so long as we can reach the desired end. We not only abjure Truth, but do Violence to it. The objective of the common mortal in a fight is to win the game, not to play the game fairly and honestly. In such a case, the means, which is often dishonest, assumes primary importance. Therefore, according to Gandhiji, in our struggles in life, if we choose the path of Truth, we avoid Violence. On the other hand, what is Truth is also Non-Violent, according to him. Truth can never resort to force or coercion because its votary recognizes and respects Truth in others. But to follow the path of Truth and Non-Violence is not an easy matter, because there is nothing like absolute Truth in this world.

What would appear true today may prove untrue tomorrow. The laws of nature which man has discovered today and which he considers to be true, may on further investigation be found to be untrue. The peak of the Himalayas which appeared to be a true summit of the mountain range might, on going higher, become only a subsidiary summit, the real summit being much higher. If that be true of the physical world, it is much more so of the moral and spiritual world. In these spheres, subjective realization, and not objective impression, is our guide. In these regions of mind and spirit, one has therefore to depend on one's environments, upbringing, training and experience for guidance. In deciding what is Truth, one has to rely on one's own inner judgement. What appears to be true this moment may thus prove untrue at the next moment. It is clear, therefore, that in order that one might perceive Truth, he has to undergo *sādhanā*, penance, and various forms of discipline which are necessary for developing these faculties of perceiving Truth. It is only by constant vigilance over one's actions and thoughts that one is capable of cultivating

With Mahatma Gandhi at 1 Woodburn Park, Calcutta, November 1937

l to R Sarat C. Bose, Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, Mahatma Gandhi, Dr Sunil C. Bose and Bibhabati Devi

With Gandhiji at the bedside of Dinabandhu C. F. Andrews, Calcutta, 20 February 1940
Dinabandhu passed away on 5 April 1940



During Gandhiji's 21 days' fast in February-March 1943, while he was detained at Aga Khan's Palace, Poona, after the 'Quit India' demand by the Congress in August 1942. Gandhiji's condition caused great anxiety, and Dr Roy, as his medical adviser, is seen here surrounded by Press reporters making enquiries about the state of Gandhiji's health.

On the way to Gandhi Ghat, Barrackpore, January 1949, with a sapling from the Bodhi Tree in Ceylon, sacred to Lord Buddha, for planting in the grounds sacred to Mahatma Gandhi *L to R* Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Governor K. N. Katju, Chief Minister Dr B. C. Roy, Judicial Minister N. Dutt-Mazumdar, Land Revenue Minister B. C. Sinha

these faculties. In undergoing such penance, such rigorous discipline, one must abjure anger, jealousy or any of the passions which rule the animal in man. In fact, discipline is necessary for the purpose of controlling them. The more one is purified the more he disciplines himself, and the more one subordinates his emotions and passions to what is eternal, permanent and true, the more he begins to realize Truth. No one can undergo this process of purification if he is violent in thought and action.

To Gandhiji, therefore, Non-Violence and Truth were almost synonymous and out of this unity arose all the formulae and canons of life which he enunciated from time to time and he himself followed. Take for instance his insistence on the wearing of Khadi. It is not for the purpose of forcing a decision on people who were accustomed to wearing foreign clothes. It might perhaps have been considered by some as a political weapon against the foreigners, but fundamentally the idea of his insistence on Khaddar arose from the fact that people in this country should not become dependent upon foreign aid. Necessary things should be provided for by the people themselves and produced in the country to make us self-reliant and self-sufficient. It was not a policy of narrow exclusiveness. Such a policy would necessarily imply violence. It was not for using it as a weapon against the foreigners that Gandhiji took up the question of Khadi.

The agriculturist in India admittedly has immense amount of leisure in the year even after doing his seasonal work. For him to engage himself in some enterprise which would give him clothing would be a blessing. It was not possible for a villager or a group of them to have mills in every rural area. It was necessary, therefore, that they should be encouraged to go back to their old system of spinning and weaving their own clothing to cover their nakedness. The approach was based on the truth that man must be self-reliant. In so far as such activities were non-violent, it was a correct approach. If, as happened sometimes, people in their exuberance had destroyed foreign clothes or burnt them, such action did not conform to Gandhiji's principles of Non-Violence and Truth. It is from that point of view that he made his famous declaration of having "committed a Himalayan blunder" and also withdrew the Non-Co-operation movement after the Chauri Chaura incident. He knew, although his suggestions were born of Non-Violence and Truth, his followers could not imbibe this spirit

and merely gave vent to their hatred of the foreigners by indulging in violence. It was clear, therefore, that Gandhiji not only preached this principle but also practised it in life.

Along with many of my countrymen I wondered, during the first period of Gandhiji's declaration of faith in the principles of Non-Violence and Truth as weapons to fight the foreigner, whether they were applicable to India, whether they were principles of any practical value in this country. They might be true in other regions and worlds. How was it possible, I argued, for a dependent country and its people to combat and fight a powerful and fully equipped opponent like the British Imperialism with non-violent weapons? Was it possible for the defenceless people of this country to face the bullets and rifles and the cannons of the foreigners? Was it not a fact that the previous attempts in history for freedom of the country, for example, the Indian Mutiny of 1857, were crushed by the opponents possessing superior physical force? How could a weak, emasculated nation fight a powerful enemy? On the other hand, in the world of today, Dishonesty rules, Untruth prevails over Truth. How could human beings perform their daily work on the basis of Truth? If by declaring oneself as a votary of Truth and Non-Violence a Congressman was to act otherwise, would not that be an act of hypocrisy on his part? These were my reactions in the early years of Gandhiji's declaration of the fundamental principles of life. It was natural, therefore, that I did not feel attracted to the Congress organization which had these guiding principles but which I regarded as unattainable in life.

I, however, gradually began to realize that in this cosmic world the principle of Non-Violence was in operation everywhere. Is it possible for the stars and planets to move along their respective orbits except on the principle of Non-Violence? There is no violence in their movement. Each moved in its orbit, after an adjustment of all the forces by mutual attraction and repulsion. The same is true not only of the starry regions but of the objects in the world. The leaves of a tree cannot consider themselves to be more important and essential than the branches, the roots, the flowers and the fruits of the tree. If such competition existed, the tree would be devoid of its usefulness. There is an adjustment of the forces that make the seed grow into a tree which in its turn adjudicate

the claim of the roots, the leaves, the flowers and the fruits for their respective growth and development. If the seeds were not sown, the tree would not have grown up; if the flowers had not blossomed then pollens would not be available for the propagation of the species. In the case of the human body also, I perceived that none of the organs of the body, the heart, the lungs or the brain could exist and perform its functions unless one was adjusted to the other. In fact, health in the individual really depended upon such mutual adjustment. Diseases followed maladjustments. These adjustments again were only possible through the action and counteraction of various factors like the secretions of various glands of the body. These seemed to be so neatly and nicely adjusted that a man continues to live so long as these adjustments are available. Sometimes crisis appears, maladjustments follow. It appears that in face of such a crisis if the human constitution has the reserve power and the elasticity to meet and overcome the maladjustments, the machine continues to function again normally. It might be that the break in this system of adjustments is so serious as to endanger life. Throughout the period of human existence, therefore, there is this continual conflict between different forces of construction and destruction and a solution of these conflicts must be secured for the sake of the organism as a whole. And who knows what happens to us after death? Does our experience stop short after what is known as the physical death of the individual? All thoughts and experiences which one collects throughout the earthly existence become permanent assets of the individual. The mystery of our life after death and our existence thereafter have been repeatedly discussed through centuries and I do not know of any particular viewpoint which has been regarded as final. No viewpoint can be final. The world and the individual in it are constantly in the process of evolution and development in their experiences, views and concepts. But one patent truth I have come to realize more and more is that in this life and the next, the creed of Truth and Non-Violence prevails.

This was perhaps the secret of the mutual attraction between Gandhiji and myself. I cannot say whether the whole of this process of reasoning had arisen in me *suo moto*. It is quite possible, and I think perhaps it is more than possible, that the lives of my parents and their example and character had left an indelible inheritance which guided me towards this

reaction to Gandhian creed. I learnt from my parents that no idea born of Truth ceases to exist. It has a faculty of spreading out in ever increasing orbits. Its influence and potency were greater than those of an atom bomb or hydrogen bomb. It would continue to operate amongst individuals in widely expanding zones of influence whether the individual is in his bodily life or not. But after death such ideas and ideologies have a chance of pervading wider regions and of widely influencing people and thoughts when the limitations of the flesh are removed. My parents were very religious-minded. By that I mean that they had throughout their lives disciplined themselves to control passions, prejudices and emotions which are regarded as frailties in human beings. This they could not have done except through their devotion to Truth, which is God, except through prayers and meditation and penance, which, again, are guided by the Almighty. In His Universe He has established the principles of Non-Violence and Truth, and anybody worshipping Him and realizing Him to be the Guide of his Destiny, cannot afford to follow any other guide. Such a practice of religion cannot remain confined to any sect, caste or form of worship. It is the development of personal relationship of the individual with the Creator which gives him the strength to follow the principles of Non-Violence and Truth. If I have, in my life, succeeded in following these principles it has been through the influence of my parents.

From K. P. Thomas, *Dr B. C. Roy*, West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee, Calcutta, 1955.

Lighting the [illegible] lamp in token of the formal opening of the Mahanirvan Sadan, Calcutta, on 10 August 1965. Its foundation stone was laid [illegible] on 10 August [illegible] Rabindranath Tagore at the invitation of Subhas Chandra Bose, who had [illegible] to provide shelter and protection for those who have toiled and suffered so that India may be free and [illegible] as a worthy symbol of their hopes and ideals.

Netaji Subhas

Today is the birthday of Subhas. Fifty-one years ago, on this very day this great son of Bengal was born.

As we now remember him on his birth anniversary, we cannot but remember other great sons of Bengal who came before him and made his advent possible. Bankimchandra is the foremost among them. Prophet-like he sang to the glory of his motherland—freed from foreign domination. A time was when his clarion call *Vande Mataram* reverberated from the high Himalayas down to the farthest South. We remember Brahmananda Keshub Chunder who called his country to a baptism of fire so that it could emerge pure and chaste from out of its fiery ordeal. We recall also those inspiring words of Swami Vivekananda who claimed the poorest and the lowliest of Indians as his blood brother. We remember also those stirring days of Bengal Partition when Surendranath lit the lamp of freedom in the remotest corners of this land. Then there was Asutosh with a lionine heart who would not remain content with anything less than complete freedom of his country. Freedom, first. In thunderous Freedom second, Freedom always! There was also the valiant voice of Chittaranjan who had the courage to make a public pronouncement when Subhas was arrested. 'If love of my own country is a crime,' he said, 'I am a criminal.'

We remember also that it was under the leadership of the great Deshabandhu that Subhas enlisted himself as a soldier to fight for his country's freedom. Let us not forget how very young he was at the time—barely twenty-two or twenty-three—and yet he had the courage of sacrifice to give up the 'heaven-born' service of the British Empire in India—the Indian Civil Service. Subhas was in the direct line of Bengal's tradition

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[illegible] All-India Radio. Translated by Khitis Roy

of self-sacrifice for a noble cause. In this, he was a worthy successor of the example so nobly set before us by Shri Chaitanya of medieval times, emulated as nobly by Chittaranjan in our own days. His act of sacrifice reminds one of the verse:

> Yours is to mitigate the hurt of
> pain which others suffer.
> Yours is to hide your own sorrow
> behind a smile.
> All that you have is yours
> to wipe the tears from other eyes.
> So, let all your desire be
> to pour yourself in the service of all.

My memory goes back to sometime in 1927, when Subhas returned to Calcutta from his incarceration in Mandalay Jail. The prison-life had utterly broken down his physical health. But nothing could subdue his indomitable spirit and the vigour of his mind; his enthusiasm was infectious. That was when I saw him at close quarters and developed an intimacy with him.

Nearly twenty or more years have passed since then. Today, as I was going through his personal relics, I came across a piece of paper with his handwriting on it and the words were, "Freedom is Life". This indeed was his life's motto—all his life was a ceaseless struggle for the freedom of his motherland. When the history of India's freedom is written and the part played in it by his Indian National Army, it will bear out how with Subhas the two words 'Life' and 'Freedom' were synonymous.

This is not the occasion to go into the various phases of his career. I wish only to say that Subhas created history. History is generally regarded as a chronicle of the past. But here was a contemporary hero whose achievements have indubitably passed into history—whose life was historic in the true sense of the term.

The way Subhas welded into unity men of diverse faiths and persuasions was nothing less than historic. The signal achievements of his Indian National Army in its forward march, the way the Hindus, the Mussalmans, the Sikhs and the Christians followed his lead—all of them imbued with

and inspired by his example—were nothing short of a miracle. He had but one watch-word for his men —*Jai Hind,* Victory to India—a battle-cry which was accepted by one and all, irrespective of their caste and creed. We cannot afford to forget this noble utterance—this slogan of unity. We must cast aside all narrow considerations of caste and community and resolutely march onward to achieve India's victory at all fronts.

Today India is passing through a series of crises. Freedom has come, but where is our freedom from hunger? There are the hungry wailing for food —wheresoever we go. Freedom has come, but where is our freedom from suicidal hatred? The communal clashes have spelt disaster for millions of men. There has been colossal and entirely senseless loss of life and property. Hunger and death stalk this unfortunate land. It is during these dark and dreary days that we remember, all the more forcibly, that freedom is not death and destruction, that freedom is, as Subhas has said, life itself. If our political freedom fails to deliver us from our economic slavery, if freedom degenerates into a freedom to hate and kill our brethren—then it were better that we remained in chains. Let us deserve our freedom if we wish to pay real homage to the kind of freedom-fighter that Subhas had been.

The foremost task awaiting us today is to build our Bengal anew. Let us not forget that our Bengal was never destined to be a land of hunger and famine. It was no poetic exaggeration when this land was described as verdant and fruitful. We have all the wealth if we only know how to work united in heart and mind to gather it. What we need is united effort to put to use all the riches with which nature endows this fair and golden land. What is impossible for an individual to achieve is easy of achievement when we work heart to heart, hand in hand.

On this auspicious occasion of Subhas's birth anniversary, I have but one appeal to make: Sons and daughters of Bengal, wheresoever you may be, whatever the walk of your life—unite and work for the good of your country! Partake of that great vision of freedom which Subhas had for his country. As I stand here before you, I seem to hear his sweet and sonorous voice calling upon his countrymen: "Unite and work ceaselessly, do not resort to fear."

23 January 1948

Nehru · an Elder's Estimate

It was at a public meeting in the Calcutta Maidan, I could scarcely realize why, as I spoke, about a million people present there suddenly burst into laughter. Did I say something funny? Yes, I did. Jawaharlal was by my side and I had referred to him as "my old friend Motilal Nehru". It was in 1957. I explained it away by saying that I had known old Motilal even before I came to know young Jawaharlal and I still saw in him the image of my old friend of revered memory, his father, Motilal. The truth is, since the early twenties, I had become almost a member of the Nehru family; and since then I have known Jawaharlal.

Nehru's father was a handsome man—sensitive, affectionate but always unyielding. Jawaharlal is more handsome, often more affectionate, very much more sensitive, but he is also in his dealings with others more generous —generous even to a fault at times. He takes human failings in the natural order of things and, therefore, sometimes ignores them. But he is uncompromising with those who lack faith or are devoid of will and effort. He always approaches both his friends and others, as he himself says, "with a good heart and spirit, without ill will even with regard to those who oppose me".

Jawaharlal is a man of destiny, but he is lonely even in the midst of crowds who deeply love him but do not always understand him. This is so because Jawaharlal is different from others. Though educated in the West he does not belong to the old world of Europe—as some ungenerous critics seem to think—but his is the voice of the still older world of India and Asia, a voice which belongs to the ancient civilization of the East—very much distinctive and very much vital, but which has renewed itself from the experiences of contact with other countries in the present times. That is why it is a voice which has deep roots in the past and still has the dynamic urges of both today and tomorrow.

To Bidhan - Jawaharlal

Jawaharlal's is a difficult personality to understand especially for those who have not known him well. Sometimes such people may differ from him until they meet him, but they invariably agree with him once they talk to him. The secret is that he tries to understand their viewpoint as much as he persuades them to understand his. Jawaharlal's approach to every problem is broadly human and based on truth and tolerance. When you leave him you come out with a feeling that you have scored most of your points, but in reality he knows that he too has not lost any of his own. He is accommodating yet uncompromising—truly as Motilal had said of him even as far back as in 1920: "I would neither wish nor expect him to yield on a question of principle."

I am often asked by the younger people—and also as a medical man—what is the secret of Jawaharlal's eternal youth, his ever joyous mood, and his alert, clear and analytical mind?

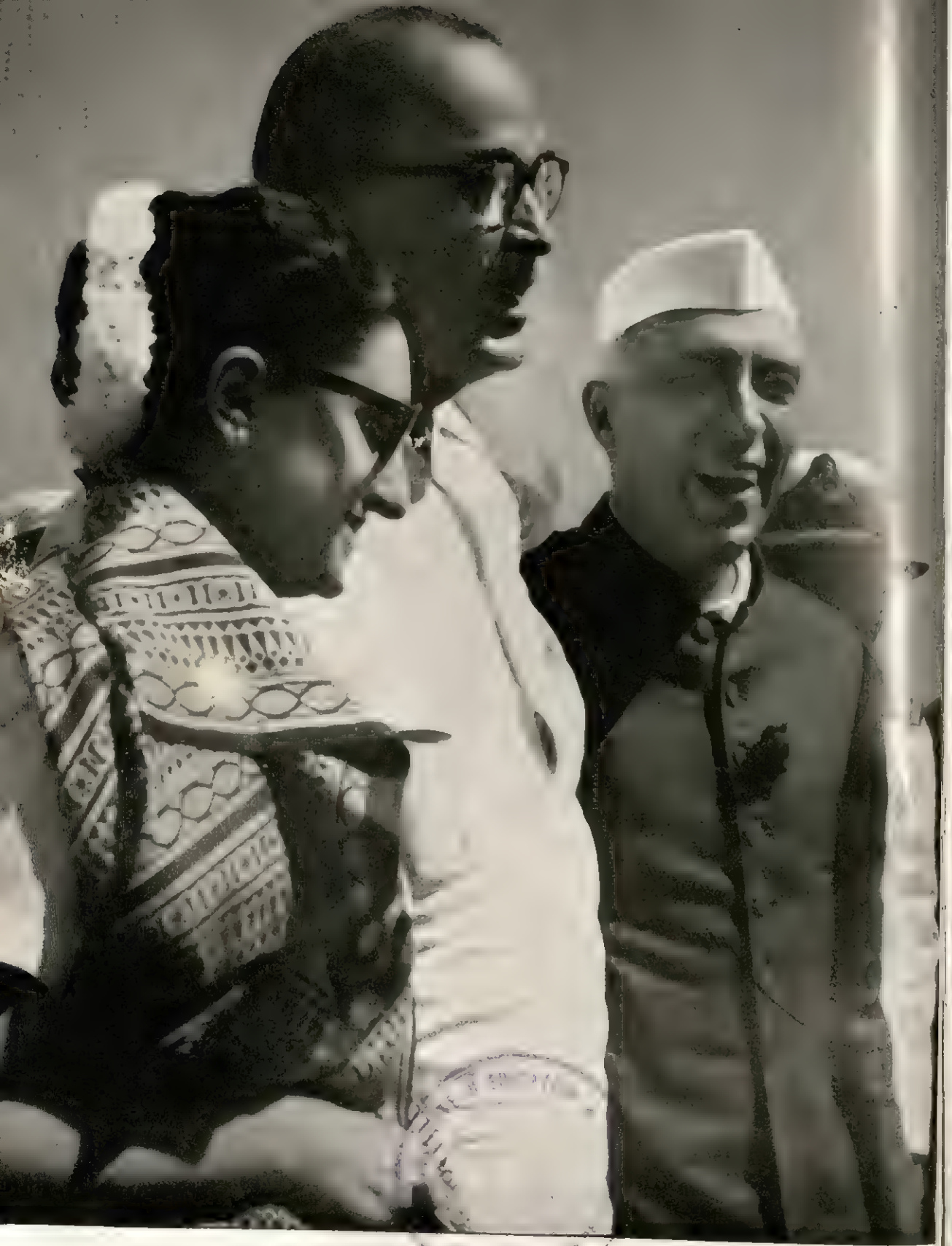
It is difficult to answer this question but I have a feeling that it is Jawaharlal's wonderful capacity to adjust himself to every environment. When he is with little children, he is one of them. He tickles them, plays with them and talks to them in their language and of things which they love and can understand. When with the youth he shakes off fifty years of his age and is full of energy—he would scale barriers, even climb lamp-posts, run and jump and skip with them and give such a heavy laugh to them that he becomes one of the youth. With the tribal people he would don their fancy costumes and even join in their dances. When addressing the masses he would speak to them of their problems in an easy, conversational style and carry every one of them with him. With diplomats he discusses serious world problems, with politicians matters of politics, with scientists the latest researches and discoveries, with industrialists the modern production methods and with women housekeeping. He is at home in every place at all times. Incidentally, while talking to doctors he always says he understands very little of drugs, herbs and pills, for he seldom takes any medicine. Jawaharlal is free from the strain of meeting people and, therefore, at all times he is happy and relaxed. He radiates youth and jovousness, which he carries with him wherever he goes, and he infects others with them. That is why Tagore once said that Nehru is "a person greater than his deeds and truer than his surroundings".

It was a philosopher perhaps who once said that most ills in this world came from the fact that we remembered things we should have long forgotten and that we forgot things which we should have always remembered. Then there is something equally strange about the human mind: it is not its capacity to remember what is important, but to forget the irrelevant things when so necessary. Memory is like a series of pigeonholes where experiences are sorted and stored. If the mind can be so trained as to open one pigeonhole at a time, one can concentrate on things, think clearly and avoid the confusion from which most people often suffer. The capacity to draw on one thing at a time and forget the rest is not a yogic feat but a result of serious training. When you want to relax and rest for a while and banish worry, you should close all the pigeonholes. Then you are happy. This is exactly, I think, how Jawaharlal's mind works. He can concentrate and yet not let anything oppress his mind or even linger on and make him unhappy. He deals with thousands of problems and prepares himself for a new problem every few minutes; yet he is never tired, never wanting in sympathy. This is the secret of his vitality, his youth, his radiant energy.

Jawaharlal today carries a heavy burden as the first pilot of the ship of state. As he himself once said, "The hardest sentence you can give to any individual today in India is to put him in a seat of authority." What Gandhiji said when Jawaharlal became Congress President in 1929 is as true today as it was then, "It never was to be a crown of roses. Let it be all thorns now."

I cannot do better than sum up my feelings in the words of Sarojini Naidu, who shared both his pride and pain on that occasion and wrote to him:

"It is both your Coronation and Crucifixion—indeed the two are inseparable and almost synonymous in some circumstances and some situations: they are synonyms today especially for you, because you are so sensitive and so fastidious in your spiritual response and reaction and you will suffer a hundredfold more poignantly than men and women of less fine fibre and less vivid perception and apprehension, in dealing with the ugliness of weakness, falsehood, backsliding, betrayal . . . all the inevitable attributes of weakness that seek to hide its poverty by aggressive and bombastic sound. . . . I feel that you have been given a challenge as well as offered a tribute: and



With Jawaharlal Nehru and Srimati Indira Gandhi

With Jawaharlal Nehru in Gangtok, 1952

With Jawaharlal Nehru in Darjeeling, 1952

In a helicopter to a flood-affected area in Murshidabad

Enjoying a joke with Jawaharlal Nehru and Prafulla Chandra Sen

it is the challenge that will transmute and transfigure all your noblest qualities into dynamic force, courage and vision and wisdom. I have no fear in my faith."

From Rafiq Zakaria (Ed.), *A Study of Nehru*, Times of India, Bombay, November 1959.

Sir Nilratan Sircar as I knew him

My earliest recollections of Sir Nilratan date back to the early years of the present century, when I happened to be present at a case which he came to treat. Gentle in manners, grave in his demeanour, patient and suave in his behaviour towards the relations and friends, he inspired the fullest confidence in the patient. It was his nature, I found, to patiently listen to the detailed enumeration of the patient's symptoms, to observe the minutest signs and symptoms of the disease and variation from the normal and to correlate the cause and effect of every such observation. As I learnt afterwards, in his professional life, Sir Nilratan was great because he looked after the smallest detail. I came in closer touch with him, however, when I appeared before him as an examinee in Medicine. Because his knowledge of the subject was great, he did not despise the smallness of our knowledge nor poohpoohed our ignorance ; from his method of approach to the candidate, I learnt a lesson which subsequently in life inspired me throughout as an examiner, namely, that it is essential for the examiner to test the knowledge and not the ignorance of the examinee, that if an examiner is to perform his duties conscientiously, it is imperative that he should have patience, tolerance and sympathy and even respect for the halting, hesitating and nervous candidate. Yes, this sympathy and respect for the feelings and sentiments of others, differently situated in life, formed the warp and woof of his whole being and expressed themselves in manifold ways throughout his life.

But this association with him, formed under such difficult and unusual circumstances, developed into an intimacy out of which I was to benefit immensely. His respect for fellow-beings developed in him a moral standard of values which helped him to raise the entire code of ethics of the medical

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An obituary tribute to Sir Nilratan Sircar who passed away on 18 May 1943.

profession in India. In his treatment of his colleagues, he gave them and their opinions every respect; and in his consultations, he would neither approvingly concur nor aggressively differ from them. He would do nothing to lower the reputation of a practitioner, as he knew that this would lower the prestige of the profession he was proud to belong. And further, his respect for men and things developed in him a keen sense of humour, which made his life fuller, and friendship with him became both profitable and pleasant. He could keep his listeners amused for hours with stories culled from his long experience of men and things; such stories were at once interesting and instructive. It was his peculiar faculty that he never said anything to hurt anyone; and even if anyone disagreed with the trend of such stories, his suavity of manners and geniality of temperament, his infective laugh and frank behaviour quickly dispelled such a feeling. Even to his dying days, he never lost touch with the humorous side of life and its incidents and I doubt not that the patience, with which he bore the infirmities and disabilities of the closing days of an intellectually active and full life, was the result of his possessing such a sense of humour and a deep faith in Providence.

Second only to his sympathy towards and respect for others, specially for those who were less fortunately placed in life, socially, economically and intellectually, was his burning thirst for knowledge. He could talk with confidence and facility on any matter dealing with commerce and industry, agriculture and irrigation, medicine and public health, poetry and literature, philosophy and rhetoric. His library had a large collection of books on various subjects and it was inspiring to see him at the close of a tiring day of his professional life, lying in his bed, surrounded by books, recent and old, which were the companions to give him solace and inspiration. Born in poverty, he could not in early life indulge his thirst for knowledge but as soon as opportunities presented themselves, he continued his studies and qualified himself for the highest examination in Arts and Medicine. But as he learnt more, his desire to share his learning with others increased. The eighties of the last century witnessed rapid development in the science and practice of Medicine in all its branches, and Sir Nilratan and his friends quickly realized that the Indian practitioners of the future would have no chance of imbibing such knowledge and profiting by it and,

what was more important, of increasing the bounds of such knowledge, unless non-official medical institutions were started and developed which would be less hide-bound to the traditions of a service than the then existing official Medical College was and which would afford to the aspiring and enquiring minds of the youths of the soil facilities and opportunities of research. Nilratan realized the fact that knowledge in the rapidly developing and progressive medical sciences would soon become stale unless it was periodically vitalized by newer ideas and fresher investigations. Thus it is that, early in his professional life, he joined others and founded a medical school to be entirely manned and administered by indigenous agencies, a school which ultimately developed into the present flourishing Carmichael Medical College. He taught in it, worked for it, raised money for it, and ultimately presided over its activities for many years. In this college, a large number of workers have found opportunities for satisfying their quest for new truths, and so long as the college retains its usefulness, it would remain a unique testimony and a living memorial to Sir Nilratan.

But how could a man, with such a fund of knowledge and of human sympathy, remain confined, for long, within the limits of a professional life? It was fortunate that he chose medicine as his profession ; for in his career as a medical man he could get a fuller play of that spirit of service and sacrifice which is born of a deep understanding of human nature and sympathy for fellow-beings, particularly for those suffering from disabilities, distress and disease. He realized that poverty and disease were twin sisters, that problems of sanitation in Bengal were intimately associated with those of agriculture and communications ; that unless the people of his country were raised out of the rut of self-complacency and inferiority complex, no material or mental improvement was possible in this decadent province of ours. He was naturally distressed with the political subjugation of the country and was convinced that without political power no remedy for our ills was worth anything ; that such power can only be effective in an atmosphere of freedom, that to achieve such freedom, we should develop an individuality which would leave its impress in every sphere of life. He had respect for others, because he recognized that each one of us is a unit in the army for achieving freedom ; he was keen to imbue every one with knowledge and erudition, because they helped to develop their individuality. With this background,

Lighting the first of the Hundred Lamps lit on the occasion of the Birth Centenary of Sir Nilratan Sircar, "my teacher and guide", at the Mahajati Sadan, Calcutta, 1 October 1961

it is easy to understand how Sir Nilratan, in spite of the tiresome activities of a busy medical practitioner, could have the time and inclination to engage in developing industrial concerns or to contest a seat in the municipal corporation or in the Legislature. He was not drawn to these contests merely to satisfy a consummate ambition, or increase his material resources ; in fact, from the worldly point of view, if we strike out a balance sheet, we will find that he lost in all such ventures. But success or failure in a venture does not worry an ardent patriot like him. He was wise enough to know that the failures of today are the pillars of success tomorrow. He realized that what really counts in the affairs of life is that genuine and honest efforts are made to achieve the end, and then the end can take care of itself.

If one were to attempt to find out the perennial source of his sympathy and respect for fellow-beings, of his service and sacrifice in their interest or of his inordinate thirst for knowledge, one has to go deeper into Sir Nilratan's make up. In spite of his devotion to a materialistic and professional career, he had a soul which made him conscious of a spiritual value even of things apparently material. His faith in Providence was profound and in times of difficulties one would see him sink within himself and seek communion with himself and his Maker.

Sir Nilratan lived beyond the allotted span of human life ; he was never tired of doing his utmost for every movement intended to benefit his countrymen ; he gave his best to his country and fellow-beings ; in the medical profession he formed a connecting link between the old and the new. He could easily lead the medical profession for well-nigh four decades and was helpful to his colleagues in the profession, because he read extensively, observed deeply, because he made it his business to keep in touch with all the recent and current developments of medical science and practice. He conquered poverty and ignorance and will ever remain a shining example to all similarly situated in life. Determination, perseverance and will to conquer achieved this conquest. He died honoured, respected and loved by all who came in contact with him or knew his activities in life. May his soul find peace in Heaven.

From the *Calcutta Medical Journal*, June 1948.

EDUCATION

Education claimed, long before politics did, Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy's allegiance. He was elected a Fellow of Calcutta University in 1916, and since then his connection with it had been almost continuous till the very end of his life, except for a brief period in 1930, when he resigned to protest against the Vice-Chancellor's communication to the students asking them not to join the Civil Disobedience Movement. He was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University in 1942.

It was at the instance of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee that Bidhan Chandra first sought election to the Bengal Legislative Council in 1923. Sir Asutosh expected that the University, which an alien government was then trying to turn into an official instrument, would have in him a sturdy spokesman. That he fulfilled such expectations would be evident from his speeches in the Bengal Legislative Council in the twenties, reproduced in a subsequent section of this book.

Dr Roy succeeded, in 1942, Acharya Prafulla Chandra as President of the National Council of Education, and, in 1955, he piloted the bill conferring university status on the College run by the Council. His association with the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, as Chairman of its Board of Governors, was equally close and fruitful. His admiration for the educational ideals of Rabindranath is expressed in his address at the Convocation of Visvabharati in 1954, and he was instrumental in establishing the Rabindra-Bharati University in commemoration of the centenary of the birth of the poet.

Some of India's basic educational problems are discussed in his Convocation address at Lucknow University in 1956.

Visvabharati

GATHERED together at the annual convocation of this great institution, let us first of all remember and pay our respects to Kaviguru Rabindranath who envisaged and established the institutions of Santiniketan, Sriniketan and Visvabharati.

It may not be out of place if we recapitulate some historical facts connected with this institution. At the outset, let us quote from one of the poet's writings wherein he describes the idea uppermost in his mind before he founded his Brahmacharya Vidyalaya at Santiniketan:

"At times I visualize to myself an imaginary picture of the rishis of yore and how they used to live in their humble cottages in tapovanas, sharing life in common with their own family and their resident disciples, devoting themselves to the acquiring and imparting of knowledge. It will be a fortunate day for Bengal if seekers after knowledge and truth of this land could devote themselves to their distinctive pursuits, away from the struggle for existence and the din and tension of the city, installed in such tapovanas set amidst the quiet and open countryside. Obviously, this tapovana idea, conjured from the past, cannot apply to India as a whole. India's thirty crores can neither find shelter in these tapovanas, nor would it be desirable to have them all devoted to the discipline of study and meditation in the manner of hermits. As a matter of fact, it would be positively dangerous to have them do so. Nevertheless, it is a few dedicated spirits of every country who vindicate and preserve the values and ideals of that country. The average Englishman goes about with his own avocation, it is only a few of the greatest among them who are actively engaged in safeguarding what the Britishers prize most as Freedom and Democracy. But it is always the effort of the few that add to the stature of a country. Therefore, eman-

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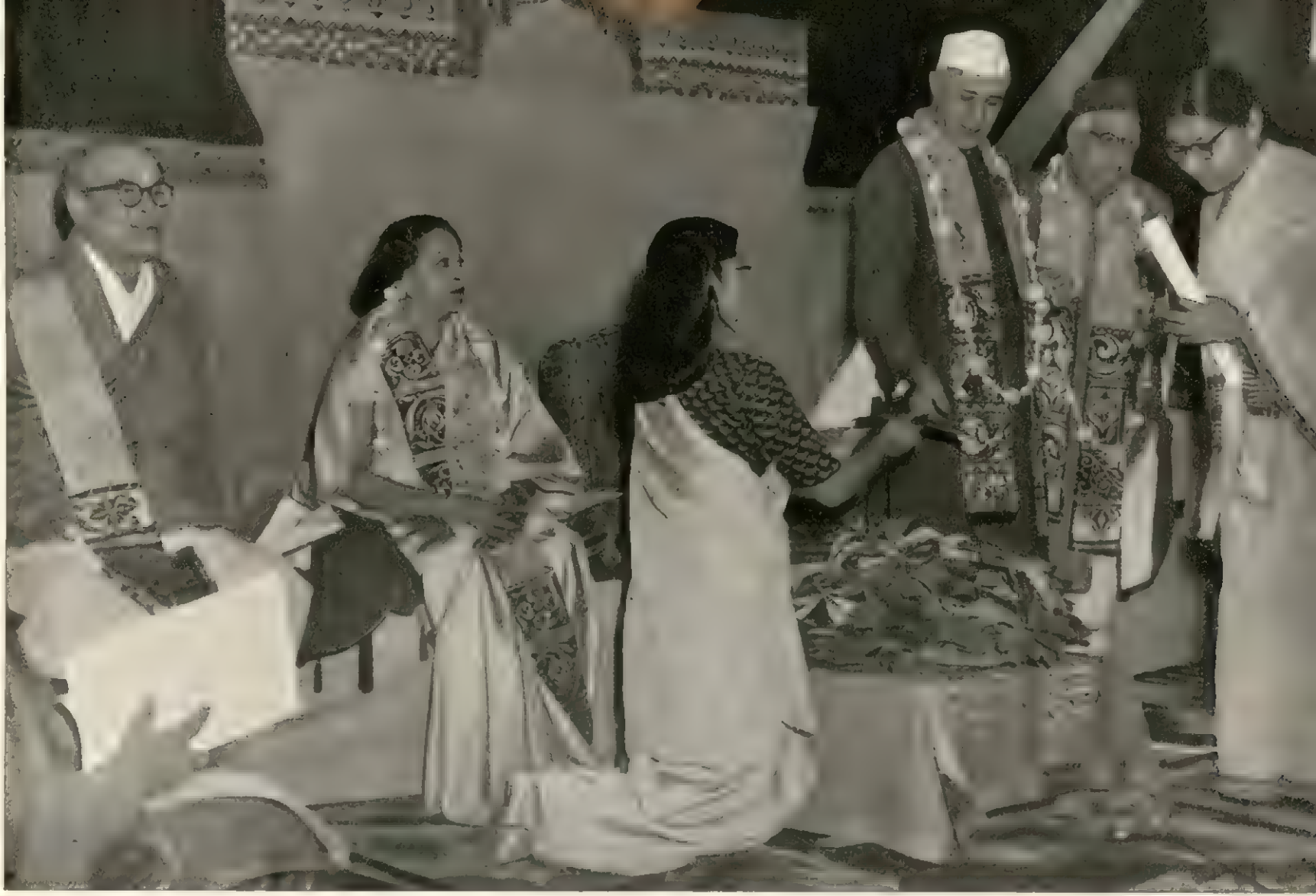
Convocation Address, Visvabharati, 24 December 1954. Translated by Kshitis Roy.

cipation of the spirit of a few of her great sons will bring emancipation to India as a whole. A few of these tapovanas nurturing free spirits will undo the shackle of slavery with which the soul of India remains enchained."

With this vision as its basis, the Vidyalaya started its career at Santiniketan in 1901. Rabindranath must have also felt that the type of education imparted by our Universities was not all to the good of the country. From his writings and speeches of the time, one notices he was quite alive to the fact that such education was in fact harmful in that it rendered the mind static and inactive and thereby retarded its power of original thinking—so essential for discovering new facts and truths. Moreover, it stultified the spirit of self-help and self-reliance.

It was in order to rectify this state of affairs that he established the Vidyalaya in the open fields of Bolpur, one hundred miles away from the din and bustle of Calcutta. The noble aim that he kept before him was to provide in an atmosphere of freedom and joy, in the midst of congenial human and natural environment, an opportunity for the youth of the country to grow and to express themselves through art, literature and music, so that through their self-discovery they might also discover the glory that is India. He wished to create an opportunity for the preceptors and disciples to live and move together, in steady pursuit of knowledge, after the example of the forest schools of the Indian rishis. He wished that the preceptor should accept his vocation almost as an act of worship, that the boys should tend the cattle as well as take lessons and that the girls would join hands with the mother of the community in the performance of the various domestic duties. From what glimpses we have of ancient Indian history in the Upanishads, we notice that the tapovana-based education was not dissociated from life but was in constant touch with and fully alive to the varied problems of mundane life. The resident disciples were engaged, on the one hand, in educating themselves to the fullest extent, and, on the other, in pondering over the complex problems of life. Thus, their mental facilities ranged over wide fields of life and affairs, and yet, at the same time, delved deeply into serious problems of religion and metaphysics. Thus it was that India amassed a vast wealth of wisdom and of material prosperity at the same time, which had few parallels in those ancient days. The agricultural, mineral and industrial wealth of India excited such envy that

Escorting Rabindranath Tagore who is on his way to deliver Convocation Address at Calcutta University on 17 February 1937



At the Sivananda [illegible] U.V. [illegible] Sangh [illegible] 15 January 1967

L to R [illegible]

Jawaharlal Nehru, Upacharya Satyendranath Bose, a *snataka* receiving her degree

invaders from abroad, drawn from all over the world, led one expedition after another to conquer this rich country. In her heydays India could well take pride in her wealth—both material and spiritual. How this India of history was buffeted by misfortune until she slid into the depths of degradation must have exercised the mind of Rabindranath when he was about to start the work of the Vidyalaya at Santiniketan. These were probably the thoughts which filled his mind with disgust for a type of university education patterned in the western mould. Therefore, in addition to reviving the ancient India tradition of tapovana education, he felt an inordinate urge to instil the spirit of self-help and self-reliance in the minds of his countrymen, most of whom had lost faith in themselves.

Fortunately, he was not alone in the field. Following his lead, quite a few of the well-educated elite of Bengal expressed their distrust of the prevalent system of university education and wished to join forces with him for such reform of the system as would enable it to work for the good of the country. In this connection I wish to recall to you the stirring of new life which permeated every walk of life in Bengal as a result of the Bengal Partition of 1905. A movement which began as a spirited protest against the Partition, resolved finally in a cry for educational reform. People began to realize that the degradation of our national character was to a large extent due to an alien system of education foisted on us without any regard to our way of life and unrelated to the particular problems of our country. Not only were the rulers foreign but also the leading lights of the country were schooled in foreign ways of life and thought. No wonder, therefore, that they were all impervious to the legitimate interests of the mass of the people. When the country realized that their real interests were not safe in the hands of the few English-educated gentry, their attention was perforce drawn to the need of wholesale overhauling of the educational system. What began as a political agitation against partition, virtuually became converted into a countrywide cry for educational reform. The movement spread like a conflagration all over the country—meetings were held and speeches given in protest not only in the cities and towns but also in remote villages. The youth of the country were all agog to move *en masse* out of their schools and colleges which they now described as the manufactory of slaves. Although, personally, I did not participate

in this movement in any significant manner, I could not then deny, nor can I do so even now, that the prevalent system of university education stultifies our humanity and weakens our national character. Such education does not help all-sided unfoldment of the mental faculties. On the contrary, it reduces us into a kind of mechanical robot which can only spout forth what it learns by rote—because it does not become absorbed into our system as good and proper intellectual nourishment. This ancillary movement for educational reform, which emerged out of the Swadeshi movement, brought home to the people that universities were not seats of learning in the real sense, they were rather factories to turn out matriculates and graduates in their thousands. The students were in the main interested in obtaining a certificate or a degree as passport to employment, rather than in education in the real sense of the term. Gradually, our leaders of education and culture came to admit that university education had failed in its purpose, and that ways and means must be found to rectify its defects. Exactly forty-one years before India achieved her independence, on 15 August 1906, there was a meeting held in the Town Hall of Calcutta, under the auspices of the newly organized National Council of Education of Bengal. Sir Rashbehari Ghosh, universally respected for his philanthrophic and educational activities, took the chair at this mammoth meeting. The main purpose of the meeting was to explore ways and means for establishing an ideal centre of indigenous education. Practically all the leading lights of Bengal of that time were present at the meeting which was addressed, amongst others, by Sir Gooroodas Banerjee. I give below an excerpt from his fairly long English address entitled *A Statement on the Aims and Programmes of the National Council of Education*:

"It may be said that though love of one's own country and one's own nation is laudable, yet education should not be limited by considerations of nationality, but should proceed upon a cosmopolitan basis. This may be true to a certain extent, and so far as it is true, the National Council accepts it by expressly providing for the incorporation of the best assimilable ideals of Western life and thought with our own. But though this assimilation of foreign ideals is desirable in the later stages of mental growth, in the earlier stages, such assimilation is not possible, and any attempt to force it on will retard instead of accelerating the healthy

development of the mind. Every student, when commencing his school education, brings with him, in addition to his outfit of language the importance of which should be separately considered, his stock of thoughts and sentiments, the gift of his nation, which the teacher, instead of ignoring and hastily displacing, should try to utilize and gradually improve. Want of due regard for this elementary principle is, I think, one of the main reasons why the existing system of English education in this country has failed to produce satisfactory results. Profiting by past experience and proceeding on *a priori* grounds, the National Council has accordingly deemed it not only desirable but necessary to resolve upon imparting education on national lines, and attaching special importance to a knowledge of the country, its literature, its history and its philosophy. . . . The time for change of methods has certainly arrived. . . . Of the two objects of education, namely, the storing of the mind with knowledge, and the training of its faculties, intellectual and moral, we consider the latter to be of much greater importance. And the Council will always take special care to make its methods of teaching helpful towards the development of the powers of intelligent observation, independent thinking, and self-reliant exertion, and the formation of habits of reverence for superiors, obedience to authority, and readiness to respond to the call of duty rather than to the mechanical acquisition of knowledge and the memorizing of moral maxims."

Concerning the medium of education, Sir Gooroodas said:

"Another express object of the Council is to impart education ordinarily through the medium of the vernaculars, . . . if this object is attained it will have far-reaching consequences."

We should remember that fourteen years before this meeting was held and nine years before he started his own school at Santiniketan, Rabindranath had pleaded for making the mother tongue the medium of education in his well-known article *Sikshar Herpher* (English translation *Tortuosities of Education*). Thus, his was the first voice raised on this behalf. His voice was raised once again at this meeting in the Town Hall where he read his address on *Jatiya Vidyalaya* (A National Institution). From a study of this essay one notices that although he upheld the traditional tapovana ideal and had established his own school at Santiniketan on that basis, he had a keen desire to see the youth of India holding their ground in life's

struggle, fortified by their knowledge of science and technology. That was probably the reason why, although he had founded his own school at Santiniketan, he gave his whole-hearted co-operation to the National Council of Education. Here is an extract from his Town Hall address:

"After long years the Bengali has achieved something which may be called a real gain. What he has achieved is not merely an institution, but a means whereby to realize his true self—with all its power and potentiality. Our national institution will prepare and train us for our rightful place in the comity of the nations. Good education may be distinguished from bad in that it does not overwhelm—rather does it liberate. So far what education was imparted us by our schools and colleges has worked out for our undoing. We have learnt our lessons by rote, repeated them endlessly and held them up as the ultimate truth—not admitting of any doubt or contradiction. All though we were bent upon following alien formula to be able to serve the best interests of our own country. . . . The real aim of education is to draw out the best of the promises and potentialities in us. . . . Has our education given us the power to discover what we are, wherein lies our strength and fulfilment, how we can view truth from the standpoint where destiny has placed India? Sad to say, our education has got the better of us. I can only hope that we shall be able to cast asunder the bondage of education so as to attain to the freedom of education."

Rabindranath's career as an educationist comprises three broad episodes: the Brahmacharya Vidyalaya constituted the first and the National Council of Education the second of these episodes. The third and the last was the episode of the Visvabharati. The seed-idea of the Visvabharati can well be discerned in that historic address given at the Town Hall. A quotation will make the point clearer:

"Until the other day we were living in isolation. Today the entire world knocks at our door. Histories of various races and nations lie before us like an open book, waves of light originating from distant worlds, from ages and aeons long ago, beat upon the shores of our ideas and thoughts. There is no limit set to the import of cultural goods. Our cargoes burst over with a surfeit of merchandise. There is a whole procession moving majestically at our very doorstep. Shall we, at this juncture, wander about

aimlessly like waifs and strays? Or, shall we approach this seeming bewilderment of diversities with the courage of the synthesizing mind of India, accept them, absorb them and give them a meaning and a place in our conception—so that the whole thing forms an intelligible pattern? Probably in that kind of arrangement truth will reach new dimensions and contribute something novel to the sum total of human knowledge."

This seed-idea of the Visvabharati took thirteen long years to sprout and take root. For the first time the poet suggested a name for this idea in April 1919, in the following words:

"Our new universities do not have their roots deep into the native soil. They hang on to foreign trees like parasites. Our centre of culture should not only be the centre of the intellectual life of India, but the centre of her economic life also. Such an institution must group round it all the neighbouring villages and vitally unite them with itself in all its economic endeavours. Their housing accommodation, sanitation, the improvement of their moral and intellectual life these should form the object of the social side of our activity. Our institution will undertake farming, dairying, animal husbandry and weaving with the help of the latest methods. And in order to build up an income to defray its own expenditures, our teachers and students will have close economic ties with the neighbourhood through the technique of co-operation.

Such an institution, incorporating my ideals, in this way, I have decided to name Visvabharati."

On 3 July 1919 when Visvabharati was formally inaugurated, he made his views more explicit in the following words:

"We have not yet awakened to the highest aims of life; we are more preoccupied with the task of making a living. Existence on plane is concerned with wants and needs while Life aims at fulfilment—perfection. Visvabharati is a great idea although it has appeared amongst us in the form of an infant. But the great of the world come invariably in an infant's guise. So let us rejoice that the child is born; let us blow the auspicious conchs to herald his coming."

About two and half years after this, on 23 December 1921, with Acharya Brajendranath Seal presiding and in the presence of scholars and savants of many lands, the poet made over Visvabharati as his gift to the public.

"Although geographically located in India," he said, "this Visvabharati is intended to be an international seat of learning and culture for the world as a whole." Elucidating further, Pandit Vidhusekhara Sastri said, "We have accepted as our motto the Upanishadic words *Yatra Visvam Bhavatyekanidam,* where the world meets in a single nest. The chief aim of the Visvabharati would be to let the world (Visva) be fully revealed in India (Bharat)." Explaining the meaning of the name, Acharya Brajendranath Seal observed: "The world which reaches out to India, has to be understood and interpreted from the point of view of India. That world-interpretation of India should then be presented to the world itself. It is thus that the name Visvabharati becomes meaningful."

So much for the historical background of the Visvabharati. In the act of recounting it we have also seen how the seed grew and developed into a mighty tree. After the Visvabharati became a public institution, Rabindranath nurtured it for twenty long years as its Founder-President. The noble ideals that he placed before the Visvabharati, as much as the world-reputation of its Founder, attracted to it a great deal of attention from all over the world, both during the lifetime of the poet and after his passing away. But the question persists—what is it that endows Visvabharati with a kind of distinction. At this convocation there must be a number of persons who were connected with the Visvabharati in those early days and still remain connected. It is likely some of us here were students of the Visvabharati in those days. I have a question to ask them: Do they notice any difference to distinguish the system of education in the Visvabharati from that of any other university? Are they firmly convinced that the system here is definitely better and superior? Have the alumni here secured something from their student-days in the Visvabharati, which is not available elsewhere? This University is the creation of a poet. The Visvabharati that he imagined and envisaged is probably beyond our limited conception. But we are no longer concerned so much with the creative urge and the high purpose of the Founder. Our concern is more with the extent of influence that the Visvabharati exerts on the life and thought of its students. It is this that will ultimately measure the effective success of its ideals.

Within our own living knowledge, not only Bengal but also India as

a whole had to pass through two severe political crises. The agitation was nationwide in that it touched and affected the common man—the man in the street. The first of these crises came, as mentioned already, in 1906. The wise men of our country came to the conclusion then that through faulty management of our universities and the defects inherent in their educational system, the personality of the students gets warped, their judgement stultified—and, worst of all, the education being examination-centred and a pass or a degree being essential for obtaining a job, the students devote all their time to learning things by rote even to the utter sacrifice of their power of original thinking. As a matter of fact, it was as a protest against this sad state of affairs that the National Council of Education was formed in 1906. Rabindranath became an active member of the Council as he had become doubtful of the role of the Indian universities as seats of learning—years before the Council came into being.

The second upheaval in respect of education in India took place in 1921, as a direct result of Gandhiji's movement of non-violent non-co-operation. I have no doubt in my mind that the two great contemporaries—Rabindranath and Gandhi—had identical views on the fundamentals of education. Both campaigned against that suicidal system of education which makes man sacrifice his human qualities—moral, intellectual and emotional—to be reduced to an automaton. I feel somewhat curious about one thing regarding Rabindranath. Why was it that he took such active initiative in organizing the National Council of Education—if he had to establish his Visvabharati in 1921? I try to find an answer to this quandary of mine by explaining to myself that he must have felt that education must be oriented to the needs and aptitudes and interests of the students themselves. Now, there are two categories into which the entire body of students might broadly be divided. There are those with a higher degree of sensibility, who wish to express themselves, through art, literature and music. For them aesthetics is a matter of paramount importance. Obviously, the system of education best suited to them will hardly suit the needs, aptitudes and interests of the other category who are more practical-minded, who are interested in the applied aspects of knowledge likely to bring returns in terms of money. I realize that it is no longer possible for me to get a satisfactory reply to my query. Nonetheless, I cannot help thinking that

if we are to work for the future good of this institution, we shall have to keep in mind and also cater for these two broad categories of students.

From my study of its activities, I can see that the programme of the Visvabharati has two main aspects. On one side, there is an attempt made here for mutual exchange of knowledge and culture between India and the other countries of the world. On the other, opportunities are provided here, in the midst of a congenial natural environment, for the students fully to develop their faculties and talents, according to their interests and aptitudes. The true significance of this two pronged approach should be properly understood by us. World War I broke out eight years after 1906. The poet came to realize that mutual mistrust amongst the powers and nations was what lay behind this global war of self destruction. Such mistrust has its origin in our lack of knowledge of one another. Therefore, the poet wished to bring the races and nations together on the basis of an inter-change of their cultural needs.

In 1921 Gandhiji had a feeling that the existing centres of education helped only to develop our slave mentality. He sent out his clarion call, therefore, to the student community to abandon schools and colleges. Rabindranath did not share this view. He rather felt that the boycott of educational institutions would serve only to isolate us and throw us into ourselves. Although they agreed on the futility of university education, the two of them took their different ways. The poet wished to make his Visvabharati a meeting place of the whole world. Naturally, his mind went back to those ideals with which he had started his Brahmacharya Vidyalaya. He decided that the Visvabharati should develop into such an institution that, through the study and interchange of the best gifts of their respective cultures, the various nations would begin to know and understand one another, so that the Visvabharati might become a true meeting place of the cultures of the world. He proceeded also to put his ideas into action. Visvabharati gradually developed not only as an all-India institution but also as an international centre. Here we must recognize the fact that the provinces of India are separate and different from one another not only by virtue of their administrative boundaries but also because of their distinctive cultures. At different times different races had infiltrated into and occupied different parts of India, settled down and built up distinctive

cultures of their religions, practised by different communities of men. Until then, there had been no proper arrangement made for all those different elements being introduced to one another. By providing for the study of the different aspects of the Indian civilization, as expressed through the Vedic, Puranic, Buddhist, Zoroastrian, Islam and Sikh religions, the poet tried to emphasize India's unity in the midst of diversity. He aimed also to work towards India's national integration by stabilizing peaceful relations between the communities. History of India bears evidence to the fact that such amity and fellowships are not merely an idle dream. Not only books and manuscripts but also steles and inscriptions bear out the fact that India succeeded in establishing intimate relations with south-east Asia, through the help of religion and culture alone, without ever having to take recourse to war and bloodshed. Scholar-pilgrims from India scaled hills and mountains and travelled through difficult terrains to carry the message of *maitri* to Tibet and China, and also to Japan in the Far East. There is ample evidence to show that such visits were reciprocated by the concerned countries. In this way, a bridge of mutual understanding was built between India and other Asian countries. Rabindranath saw this vision of fellowship re-established in his Visvabharati.

The institution which the poet established in 1921 in order to strengthen the fundamental conditions of world peace needs our allegiance and support today. We have to uphold and maintain its aims and ideals. It is a great responsibility reposed on us—particularly because the mind of man the world over is still distracted and his path lies through thorns and brambles. Another global war had come and gone. Two world wars, taking place one after the other, have served to widen the gulf among the nations, by leaving a legacy of malice and hatred and fear in their wake. They have lost faith and confidence in one another. The spirit of competition and rivalry is rampant. Selfish acquisitiveness is daily gaining ground, and all those human qualities of love and compassion, and man's moral sense is at a low ebb. All this cannot lead to any good. History tells us of the rise and fall of many nations. The mighty Roman empire is no more, the flashy brilliance of the Byzantine civilization is lost in the dark night of oblivion, the glory that was Egypt, Assyria, Babylon and Chaldea is now reduced to a few hieroglyphs set amidst a vast ruin of bricks and stones. But India survives still with her

age-old culture and civilization. Destiny probably wills that she plays her part for the good of the world as a whole. India must prepare herself to be able to make this contribution. We have gained our political freedom after years and years of struggle. That can hardly compare with the struggle that lies ahead of us if we really wish to serve the world as a whole. How best we can discharge our responsibility to the world is the question that rises uppermost in my mind as I stand here addressing the convocation of the Visvabharati. The poet has said that the best way we can do so would be through the study and understanding of the knowledge and culture of the world. The poet desired that his Visvabharati should play the same role as the ancient seats of learning at Taxila and Nalanda from which India sent out her message of love and fellowship to the entire civilized world. It was not his intention that this university should merely provide for the conventional type of teaching and cultivation of such subjects as History, Science, Literature, Philosophy and Psychology. He also knew that mere pursuit of knowledge through the medium of the spoken and the written word does not make for the full flowering of the human mind nor reflect life in its completeness. In every man there is an urge for self-expression. The principal aim of education should be to provide scope for and develop this instinctive urge. There is completeness of life when the arts of self-expression are wedded to the practical arts. The fullest unfoldment of human potentialities takes place when there is complete harmony between a man's words and his action. Having regard to the aims and purposes that the poet had formulated for the Visvabharati, we should take good care to ensure that knowledge is not divorced from action, that the practical arts which satisfy our daily needs are properly integrated with music, art and literature. It is here that the special distinction of the Visvabharati system of education lies and this must be maintained.

I realize what I have just said might give rise to a query in the minds of many of my audience. If it be desirable that the two elements of education—aesthetic and practical—should supplement and complement each other, why is it that this is not done on a large scale, all over the country? The answer is that the secondary schools of Bengal alone have nearly ten million students on their rolls, and what might be possible to achieve for five to six hundred students of this institution, might not be quite feasible

—at least not in any great hurry—for the very large number outside of it. We have neither the adequate number of qualified teachers nor the paraphernalia necessary for such a change-over. Then, it is just likely that not all guardians nor all students would be willing to opt for such a system. From my own experience of the institutions functioning under the auspices of the National Council of Education, I can say that the craze for technological studies is more pronounced when compared to that for humanities.

Another question that may pose itself before us is what exactly is the place of such an institution amongst our stereotyped educational institutions. My answer to that is that such an institution should serve as a model and an example—a pilot institution. As has been said already, the special significance of the Visvabharati lies in the fact that it aims at the study and understanding of the culture, civilization, art and literature of not only the various provinces of India but also of all the different countries—Eastern and Western. This interprovincial and international aspect of the Visvabharati's programme should be expanded. At the same time, an attempt should be made to effect improvements and raise the standard of training imparted here in music, fine arts, crafts and applied sciences. In this particular field it should set an example. The poet wished that the relationship between the teacher and the taught at Santiniketan should be modelled after the norms of the tapovanas of ancient India. I hope that kind of relationship of love and respect still exists among the students and their teachers here. That, too, is an example worthy of emulation. Let the Visvabharati serve as a training ground for teacher apprentices of real merit. A teacher is like a lamp. Unless the lamp itself is lighted it cannot light another. If the student is not able to draw inspiration for a higher and nobler life from the teaching given by the teacher or the example set by him, the whole purpose of education will be defeated ; education divorced from life will prove a dead-weight which he will not be able to use or apply. If the relationship between the preceptor and the disciple, between the teacher and the taught, is one of love and respect, then and only then would they be able to inspire each other. May it be given to the teachers here to follow the ideals which the tapovana of our tradition has handed down to us. May they take up the task of lighting the lamps in this part of the benighted world which is India. Nearly sixty years ago, while describing

the ideals of his Vidyalaya at Santiniketan, the poet had said, "It is always the effort of a few dedicated souls which safeguards the values and ideals of a country." I hope this will be the place where such men of high purpose would band themselves together.

In conclusion, let me end up by quoting from one of the poet's addresses:

"Here let our students acquire not knowledge alone but also faith and respect. May they be endowed with the strength of fearlessness, so that they may discover themselves, and come to realize to the very core of their being that:

Sarvam paravasam duhkham
Sarvam ātmavasam sukham."

May their heart always echo with the great words:

Bhumaiva sukham
Nālpe sukhamasti.

24 December 1954

At the reception of Rabindranath Tagore, on completion of seventy years of his life.
In front of Town Hall, Calcutta, 27 December 1931; Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, Mayor, Calcutta Corporation, who read the Civic Address on behalf of the Corporation, is seen standing (second from right); on his left is Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray, who read the congratulatory address on behalf of Bangiya Sahitya Parishad.

After the unveiling of the bust of Michael Madhusudan Dutt.

The Future of our Education

SIR ASUTOSH said once: "It has been our ambition to bring the University in intimate touch with the nation because of the supreme part it must play in developing the national consciousness, pointing out, by its attitude towards the things of life, through the whole wide range of human intelligence, the true direction of national safety and national progress. The University would be dead to the nation, if it were made to stand on a height of its own, isolated from the country." Our University endeavours to develop such association by multiplying the number of subjects which an undergraduate can take up (having regard to his taste and temperament), by undertaking the training of post-graduates in an increasing variety of subjects which would ultimately help the pupil to come in closer contact with a world of realities suited to his education and outlook, and through the knowledge gained in the University, he may not only earn his livelihood but get an opportunity of building a world of his own, round his achievements. And yet how often do we witness a brilliant student of the University failing to get or grasp opportunities to utilize his knowledge in real life! The University, therefore, should, through its intimate touch, establish contact with that world in which employees live, and afford the student guidance and advice so that he could profitably utilize his talents and become a useful member of society.

While I have alluded to the achievements of the different teaching departments of the University with some amount of justifiable pride, I am not unmindful of the fact that even well-intentioned critics have repeatedly pointed out our defects. Self-complacency should not blind us to our own faults, neither should we suffer from that ignorance which consists less in not knowing things than in ignoring things already known. The first defect

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Extracts from the Vice-Chancellor's Address at the Convocation of Calcutta University, 13 March 1943.

pointed out by our critics is that the standard of our examinations is low and continues to be low and that our graduates fare badly in any All-India competition. Let us pursue this point of view and find out if the University is directly or indirectly responsible for this state of affairs. If the percentage of passes in any group of examinations is any criterion of the standard of teaching given by the University to our students, I need only point out that during the year under review [1942] four of them obtained their Ph.D., five were admitted to the D.Sc. and two obtained the M.D. degree. Most of the examiners for these theses papers were experts belonging to other provinces or countries and no question of favouritism could arise. As far back as 1924, Dr Ganganath Jha, Vice-Chancellor of Allahabad University, expressed himself in the following terms regarding the post-graduate teaching conducted in Calcutta: "It is mainly the post-graduate departments of Calcutta University which have demonstrated beyond doubt that in almost all departments of knowledge, work of the highest kind can be carried on in India. I have had several occasions of judging the work that is being done in the domain of oriental studies, and I am prepared to assert that most of the theses submitted by researchers of Calcutta University are superior to many of those that have emanated from persons trained elsewhere. Our theses have, in many cases, come to be regarded as authorities on the subjects with which they deal." I recall this unsolicited testimonial of a high personage in the educational world because it generates self-confidence in our scholars.

But our friends then argue somewhat as follows: Calcutta University has become huge and unwieldy and they admit thousands of students for the different University examinations, the standard of which, on account of the large numbers appearing at them, naturally has fallen low. Mr O'Malley, in his latest book, *Modern India and the West*, has returned to this charge in the following words: "Funds required by Calcutta University, for teaching and research work, in so far as they are not supplied by private benefactors or by the grants grudgingly given by a Government which the University did little to conciliate, could only be provided by the success of the University as a business concern, the presentation of a large number at its examinations and the ultimate emergence of a large number of them for post-graduate study." The implications are obvious. But is

the charge of admitting an unusually large number of candidates to the examinations sustainable? Is the number inordinately high compared with that found in other countries? My friend and predecessor in this office, Dr Syamaprasad Mookerjee, quoted some significant figures in this connection a few years ago. Calcutta University serves an area covering Bengal and Assam except an area served by Dacca University. The total population of the two provinces is over 65 millions. In this area 5½ lakh pupils study in the secondary schools, 36,000 read in colleges, a proportion of 17 : 1 ; the corresponding figures for England were 12 : 1, Canada 3 : 1, Germany 9 : 1, Italy and Japan 10 : 1. Compared with these figures the number of candidates reading in colleges in Calcutta University is not disproportionately high. If the larger numbers in other countries do not indicate a low standard of education in them, why should it be otherwise in Bengal? On the other hand, within the last 30 years, although the numbers appearing at each examination have gone up six times, the average percentage of passes has remained the same. What remains then of Mr O'Malleys's assertion that this University works like "a business concern, anxious to secure quantity at the sacrifice of quality?" But yet the critics persist and point out the significant fact that in any all-India competition, Bengal students fare very badly, which shows that our boys are poorly equipped and badly trained. Either the institutions are inadequately provided and their teachers are incompetent, or that the pupils of these 1,600 schools come to them so deficient in their training in the primary stages, that they are incapable of benefiting by the instructions given to them. Let us concede for a moment the correctness of both propositions: personally I feel that our boys today show poor competitive merit and that both the factors are responsible for it to a certain extent. But if the boys receive defective training in their primary classes, is the University responsible for this? Whose duty is it to ensure suitable and sufficient primary education for our children? On the other hand, if the secondary institutions are not able to employ properly trained teachers, it is because most of these schools recognized by the University exist mainly on their income from tuition fees. State-aid, when available, is very meagre. Most of these institutions are started and conducted with non-official efforts and enthusiasm, and the vastness of the number is itself an indication of the

insatiable public demand for secondary education. The arrangements for training teachers are meagre ; there is no planned scheme for providing commercial, industrial or agricultural education, with the result that every boy has to prepare for University education, whether he is suited for it or not. What is really wanted, to remedy this defect, is not the sudden curtailment of the number of institutions, so as to reduce the total number of pupils attending them—a retrograde measure quite unsuited to meet the public demand, but to improve them by more liberal grants from the State on the one hand and to switch on a large bulk of pupils to other types of studies more suited to them. The problem of education should be approached as a whole, from the primary to the post-graduate stages, adequate funds be provided for them, and a complete planned programme be adopted and followed for a large number of years. And this problem is not peculiar to this country and province. Speaking of the schools of England 15 years ago, Mr Fisher, the then Minister of Education, said: "The wrong things are being taught in the wrong way by the wrong people. But if so, who is responsible? The culprit is the nation." I am sure, as soon as the people in this country has an effective and conclusive voice in the matter, it will demand and secure a more effective form of primary education, a well planned secondary education sufficiently diversified to meet all tastes and talents, and a liberally endowed and co-ordinated University education.

13 March 1943

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If a University is to function effectively in a democratic world, it has to keep pace with the growth of ideals and concepts regarding the value of education and functions of an educational institution. My view is that a progressive University should keep in constant touch with and provide instructions for all subjects which are likely to promote human welfare and thus give to our students opportunities of serving the community. . . .

Extracts from the Vice-Chancellor's Address at the Convocation of Calcutta University, 4 March 1944.

Talking of our future educational needs, I cannot refrain from referring to the present times. The world is witnessing today the progress of a totalitarian war—a war not merely of individuals, nations or races but a war which is a clash of ideals, a war waged to find out which concept would be acceptable to the future dwellers of this planet. Every proposal which affects the activities of humankind, be they big or small, has to be examined on the basis of the prevailing acceptable concept. Even before the war, there was a dissatisfaction all the world over with the conventional educational methods. In this country also, we are aware of the same popular discontent with our educational systems. Moreover, even this system has been insufficiently provided for and indifferently worked. In spite of the fact that some educational plan has been followed in the country for nearly eighty years, in spite of the growth and multiplication of institutions to provide training to our children and our young men, we have to admit sorrowfully that today only 10% of the people are literate, that this literacy often tends to sink into illiteracy, that the nature and quality of education provided for our children do not satisfy their lives' requirements, that the teachers themselves are ill-trained, ill-paid and ill-equipped to guide and instruct our boys and girls, that there is a big hiatus between the instruction given and the subsequent use that the students make of it. It is obvious that education, if it is to be useful, should be more vocational and therefore utilitarian in character.

The Central Advisory Board of Education in its draft report on the post-war educational development in India has come to the conclusion that "a national system of education can hardly be other than universal, it must also be compulsory if the grave wastage, which exists today under a voluntary system, is not to be perpetuated and even aggravated ; and if education is to be universal and compulsory, equity requires that it should be free and common sense demands that it should last long enough to secure its fundamental objective." "Upon the education of the people of the country," quotes the report of the Board from the White Paper containing proposals for post-war expansion of the British system of Education, laid before Parliament, "the fate of the country depends." The report mentions the insufficient and incomplete arrangements made for the education of children and refers to the incompetency and poor pay of

teachers. The Board further maintains that "a really national system could not be developed or evolved from what now exists or by the methods hitherto followed. The present system does not provide the foundations on which an effective structure could be erected; in fact, much of the present rambling edifice will have to be scrapped in order that something better may be substituted. The minimum provision which could be accepted as constituting a national system of public education for a democracy, postulates that all children must receive enough education to prepare them to earn a living as well as to fulfil themselves as individuals and discharge their duties as citizens." Every educationist must agree with the main findings of the report. National education must mean the re-orientation of our fundamental concept of human existence, on the basis of which the superstructure or reconstruction can be erected; it must mean improved type of teachers and if it is to be compulsory, free and universal, it must entail the expenditure of increasing sums of money.

We hear of post-war reconstruction in all spheres of life. I believe that in the future world-to-be education will have to be based either on the ideology of those who maintain that "the State is everything, the individual is nothing", and according to which education is conducted on a plan with a realistic outlook outlined by the dictators of the totalitarian states; or that education will be based on the theory that every individual is free—free to think, free to teach, free to learn, free to sift evidence and facts, draw tentative conclusions, remain alert for additional information and revise conclusions in the light of new findings: he should be able to think constructively about the world around him. This, in the ultimate analysis, should be the attitude of the modern youth, because he is infected by the great ideals of democracy, which are contained in the words, "Life, Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness". Such a youth is not satisfied with the old type, the time-worn conventional planned syllabus of education. Teachers who prescribe these syllabuses are daily confronted with the following question from the students, "Why should I do this?" Possibly three decades ago, the pupils were docile or had sufficient faith in their teachers or could bridge the gulf between the things they were studying and their possible usefulness in practical life a few years thence. Possibly there was a time when the teachers could, with some accuracy, predict the

knowledge and skill which their pupils would need when they entered the world and the teachers could then provide for them. But in this complex world of today, neither an Aristotle can claim to be acquainted with all branches of knowledge, nor could a King of Portugal publish a compendium of human knowledge in one volume. Hence the present educational system, which takes no count of the pupil and the environments he grows in, is a misfit ; such an education will not provide the knowledge, the acquisition of which is the objective of education. The learning process may be compared to a pyramid, the base of which is composed of facts. No worthwhile learning can take place without them. But facts are important not as an end in themselves, but in what we do with them. We must use facts in thinking situations, and the ultimate purpose of massing facts together in thought-situations is to develop the correct attitude which is the apex of the pyramid ; we cannot hope to get the right attitude unless we think straight with right facts. In appraising these facts, we find that the present type of education has no relationship to the fundamental needs and the basic social structure of the community to which the pupil belongs. It is absurd to consider that rural education should follow urban models or that girls' school should follow the same syllabus as a boys' school. Every school therefore should survey the neighbourhood and the type of students it caters for, the curriculum should be founded on the local needs so that the children of the agriculturist, the artisan, the blacksmith, and the carpenter become better suited to their vocations in life, and so that the limitations of their parents do not hamper them. The job of the school is to get boys to farm more intelligently than their fathers, or to get young women to learn how to tend their babies, cook their food, keep their houses more intelligently and with more scientific grasp than their mothers. In the next place, the "only realistic educational standards are standards of community living." We have often argued, without any finality, how much mathematics, science, history and literature should a person know at the end of sixth standard or tenth standard or in the college course : no one knows nor can any one definitely say. But we can easily judge if our education is succeeding when we find that the children behave with intelligence and enlightenment in the practical relationship of their daily lives ; and the type of education our children need in future

can only be judged by that standard. "The school work must serve as an active apprenticeship to life rather than as an abstract preparation for it." It is difficult for anyone to foresee what the future holds for us and our educational system. But I cannot conclude my discourse without referring to the Chinese saying quoted in the report of the Central Advisory Board of Education:

> If you are planning for one year, plant grain;
> If you are planning for ten years, plant trees;
> If you are planning for a hundred years, plant men.

Every educational plan in India should aim at planting men and women if our beloved country is to fulfil the destiny that is hers.

4 March 1944

Problems of Education in India

When the invitation came from my old friend the Chancellor and my friend the Vice-Chancellor to say a few words on this occasion, I was at first inclined to regret my inability to come as I have been very much preoccupied with the stupendous task of relieving the distress of the flood-stricken people of West Bengal, numbering more than ten lakhs. I felt that my preparation for this meeting would be too inadequate, and my coming here might be too strenuous. But I also realized that I should not miss this opportunity of saying a few words to my young friends, who would be the citizens of tomorrow. I am thankful to have been given this opportunity of meeting you all.

Every person interested in education and in the future of this country should realize the urgency of providing for a proper type of education for our youths, which would give them complete self-confidence in themselves, develop their personality, make them devote their full energies to the task of building this country and make them ready to serve the people and undergo any sacrifices for them. It is also realized that the present system of education has its defects. It is no use mincing matters in this respect. The teachers are inadequately paid. There is no arrangement for giving them proper accommodation close to the students' hostels. There are no hostels for the majority of students. The teacher-pupil ratio is very low, resulting in a sort of an imbalance in the educational sphere, which does not allow a proper and close intimacy between the teacher and the taught. The present system of education has become more or less a commercial proposition, where the students pay for their training and obtain a degree or diploma from the university which helps them to obtain a living afterwards.

Convocation Address at the University of Lucknow, 15 December 1956.

The first task before every educationist is to realize that the world is moving fast and in this race either we go ahead or are pushed back outside the arena. Every country in the world is attempting to develop production and to advance in economic, political and cultural spheres. In India, we have just completed the First Five-Year Plan period, during which the country has implemented the bulk of its target. We have now before us the Second Five-Year Plan. It is based upon what is regarded as the needs of the masses. It has clear-cut social objectives in view. It provides an appropriate method of mobilizing the creative urge of the people and harnessing the country's resources so as to bring about a substantial transformation in the social and economic life of the people.

Our students played a notable part in the struggle for India's freedom. They fought against imperialism and foreign domination. The sacrifices they made are written in letters of gold in the pages of the history of India of the past few decades. Thus political freedom was won. Could not they be harnessed to ensure economic freedom for the country—an all-round development of the country on the basis of a new formula which was placed before the country three years ago and which provided that those who govern and those who are governed, should form one co-operative commonwealth for the development of the country? I think that in this mighty effort to erect a permanent structure of India's socio-economic system, students can and should take a notable part.

In the University Education Commission Report we find a recognition of the part played by the students in the following words:

"We are proud of the generous and unselfish activities which our young men and women are making to lift the standard of life in the villages."

By their energy and resourcefulness the students can certainly accelerate the implementation of many development schemes in their leisure hours, even without affecting their primary objective, namely, attending to their studies. This willing co-operation on the part of the students will not only result in the early fruition of many schemes in our National Plan but will also help in developing their own personality. It is also possible that the example of the student community might influence the minds of those who might be older in years but less knowing. A new atmosphere of service and sacrifice for the country will grow up which is essential for the uplift

of this great land of ours. The youth shall lead so that the old may follow.

It is clear that the tremendous responsibility of developing the nation and the country would ultimately devolve on the youth. They can only discharge this duty if they have a trained mind and a disciplined body. It is unfortunate that in recent years we have sometimes witnessed scenes of disorder and rowdyism among the students in schools, colleges and universities. Apart from the fact that such upheavals affect the educational programme of students, they cause confusion in the country and tend to disrupt social solidarity which is essential for the orderly progress of the nation.

Why has this indiscipline appeared among the student community? There is of course the background of a general sense of unrest and disquiet brought about by the last two wars. But thinking educationists and members of Commissions and Committees who have dealt with the problem of education have regarded this indiscipline as due largely to the present system of education, which has not the vitality to meet the challenge of the times. It has become outmoded in various respects. Sri Jawaharlal Nehru once said, "It is becoming increasingly doubtful how far the present system is 'education' at all in any true sense of the word." Education today has little social significance. There is need for a greater awareness of social ideals in the minds of our educationists. Our educationists must realize that new ideals and new visions which affect the world at large also influence the minds of the young. We are living in an ever-changing dynamic world. Men and things move faster than we imagine. Old scales of values are giving place to the new. The question as to how to modulate our educational system so that it can be attuned to the needs of the modern world requires more serious consideration. As I see it, the proper education of a student must include two objectives: first, to develop the individual mentally, physically and morally, and secondly, to get such development integrated not merely with the development of the society in which the student lives but also with the world around him.

Judging from the point of view indicated above, let us analyse the causes of indiscipline among the students. The word 'discipline' has been traditionally regarded as having a negative import. The idea has been that discipline connotes a code of conduct which directs what the boy

should not do in a class, and not what he should do while attending the classes. Possibly, such a discipline might have fitted in a feudalistic pattern of society. In the modern educational philosophy discipline does not necessarily mean a quiet class-room. Even in a class-room there might be and should be some activity on the part of the students which would increase their creative faculties provided these are balanced and prompted by a definite objective. These activities should generate in them a type of righteous conduct which we may call 'social discipline'. There must be sufficient room for play of their emotions, though such exuberance of youth should be canalized for the purpose of having a healthy mind in a healthy body. Let us realize that new ideas and new aspirations, which are influencing the people of the world, generally affect, consciously or unconsciously, the minds of the young people. They do not feel satisfied today by merely passing an examination because even that does not necessarily mean their ability to earn a livelihood under the present day conditions. An examination is held periodically and it is often a matter of gamble as to whether a student succeeds or fails in the examination. If he fails in the examination or if he obtains low marks at the examination, he cannot, under the present circumstances, have any share in most of the activities of the society. The present society demands from him the hall-mark of the university degree before he gets appointment in any service. Even if a student manages to secure a degree, it does by no means follow that he is assured of a job, so great is the rush for the few jobs that are going. He then blames the society for not giving him an opportunity, even after he has spent thousands of rupees on his education. This uncertainty about the future makes him nervous and apprehensive. What makes the situation worse today is that his entry into an institution of higher learning raises in his mind expectations which are not satisfied except by his securing a white collar job. It is an unfortunate fact that our present-day system of education does create an aversion to manual work and a bias in favour of white collar professions. As the openings in such professions are inevitably limited in number, a sense of frustration and discontent pervades the minds of large sections of students. This leads to a spirit of revolt and restlessness.

In the olden days a student commenced his scholastic career with a

disciplined life in a *brahmacharyya ashram.* I do not say that we can reproduce that system under the present conditions but what I do say is that the two special features of that type of discipline should, as far as possible, be reproduced in our future organization of education. One is that there should be closer contact between the teacher and the taught, and the second is that the student should, as far as possible, study through work. As you are aware, a student had in those days to undertake jobs at the home of the *guru*, which one might consider today as beneath his dignity to perform. Gandhiji's basic education system was also founded on a similar ideology. When I was in Japan, a few weeks ago, I found that in that country the educational system allows a large variety of extra-mural activities for the students. Such activities absorb a great deal of the natural vigour and energy of the rising generation. Study tours, sports, drills and various other activities are provided for to be gone through in close association with the teachers. This has produced in that country successive groups of young men and women devoted to the service of the country, which they have begun to value and understand. Education has created no imbalance in that country between the mind and the body. The growth of the individual student as a unit of the society has kept pace with the development of social environment in which the student finds himself. There has developed in the students in Japan a mental outlook, which, while it makes them value freedom of choice and activity, also makes them realize that they can claim no more rights than they are prepared to concede to others. There has been generated among them a sense of social discipline for the performance of social obligations.

In the changing world of today there seems to be a great controversy of thought as to the type of education to be provided for the youth. The instructions given in the sombre class-rooms presided over by the orthodox teachers and the cramming of text-books do not provide them with the joy of living. The extra time and surplus energy of the students are not canalized for any purposeful activity. Therefore, idle gossip is indulged in, and there is a tendency to form cliques and groups without any directive force to enjoin restraint and moral discipline in them.

We have also to remember that the bulk of the teachers today perhaps do not realize that there are growing in the country new forces which affect

also the student population. In the majority of cases, the teachers themselves have no constructive outlook to enthuse the students to take part in the peaceful social evolution. It is obvious that no scheme for developing a socialistic pattern of society in this country is possible if the youth of today are not made to realize that they have a vital part to play in creating a new society.

While recognizing the present defective system of education and the lack of opportunities for useful activities provided for the students, may I make an appeal to the students that so long as they study, they should always show respect to authorities and consider them their benefactors and guides? I hope that my young friends will not take my advice amiss, coming as it does from one who has been connected with educational institutions for nearly half a century. The welfare of students has always been dear to my heart but in the evening of my life I have been upset by noticing certain developments in the student community. I have witnessed instances where even for the sake of ensuring small advantages for a student or for a group of students, they bring about an atmosphere of general conflict which involves everybody, the students and the public alike. They form committees of action, they organize strikes, they picket educational institutions and they undertake fasts in order to coerce the authorities to submit to their demands. Sometimes even lawsuits have been filed against the authorities of institutions. There was one case in which a girl student of a law college, who desired to sit beside a male student in the same class—although special seats were reserved for female students—brought a suit in the High Court against the college authorities and the High Court decreed that the girl had every right to sit wherever she liked in the class. It seems to me that in such matters the students are behaving as members of trade unions who are anxious to fight for their rights. They forget that educational institutions are not commercial concerns where capitalists may exploit workers and the workers have, under certain conditions, to resort to strikes in order to have "collective bargaining". My experience of conducting educational institutions has made me realize that in many cases the students do not appreciate the fact that the cost of running an institution is much higher than the total receipts from fees, and unless the benevolent donors and the State come to the rescue many institutions cannot meet the

deficit. In a country like India where our *per capita* income is less than Rs. 300 per annum, the cost of maintenance of a college student amounts to the *per capita* income of four or five persons. The students should ponder over this fact and realize that in these circumstances they are under a special obligation to society.

It has also been my experience that in some places "teaching shops" are run privately with a commercial outlook. This should be checked, but any mass action resorted to by the students on the flimsiest pretext, for instance, to protest against non-admission to a college or non-promotion of a student, and mass demonstration against the refusal of the authorities to grant holidays, are indications of psychological imbalance which go against the spirit of our cultural heritage. Such action creates confusion and conflict in an educational institution where perfect peace and complete understanding should prevail. It is most deplorable that sometimes teachers also are guilty of instigating students to commit acts of indiscipline. The teachers get themselves involved in educational politics. It is true that they are discontented because of low salaries and unsatisfactory conditions of service. They express their dissatisfaction against the authorities and exploit the youth for their own selfish ends. By such action the teachers betray the trust that the parents and the nation repose on them. Sometimes the students approach leaders of political parties for backing up their cause, thinking that they would then be able to redress their grievances. This is very unwholesome. Political parties should not make students dabble in party rivalries. It would be a good thing if leaders of principal political parties could solemnly agree that they would keep students outside group politics and never use them for their political ends. Where students' unions are formed, they should exercise their influence to protect the interests of the students and ensure that proper opportunities are provided for them for various types of education including extra-curricular activities. The students should realize that their union is not meant to be an authority parallel to the governing body of the educational institution, which ordinarily controls the affairs of the institution. Such action on the part of the union breaks the invisible bonds between the teacher and the taught and makes the union a centre of power politics. If the students have any grievance, they should place them before the proper authorities.

in a clear, unambiguous and forceful but constitutional manner. It would be the duty and the responsibility of the authorities to remove the grievances as speedily as possible. In all matters affecting students and their education, the authorities should as far as possible take the students into their confidence. Any authoritarian method of imposing things only irritates the mind of the youth. If a sympathetic approach is made by the authorities, there would then develop in the institutions a co-operative machinery, in which will participate the authorities, the teachers and the students.

What is really unsound in the present system of education? What are its glaring defects? I have time to deal with only a few of them in a general way.

Over-crowding of Institutions

It has been our experience that some institutions are so over-crowded that there is hardly any opportunity for the teacher and the pupil to come together and know each other, which forms the basis of any good educational system. I can only talk about the State with which I am familiar. There are over 50,000 students in colleges of Calcutta. Of these over 35,000 are concentrated in five big colleges. One college with its three branches has 13,000 students, two 7,000 each and two 5,000 each. The figures are staggering; the over-crowding is enormous. This may be explained by the authorities of these institutions by saying that they feel helpless in view of the increasing demands for admission in the colleges. They may say that they have to satisfy the craze of students for higher education. When I appeared at the Entrance Examination in 1897, the total number of students taking the Examination was near about 6,000 in the provinces of undivided Bengal, Bihar and Orissa together. The total number of students appearing at the School Final Examination in West Bengal alone during the last 2 or 3 years has averaged between 50 and 60 thousand. Why is this so? There may have been an increase in the population and the increase in the number of students seeking admission to colleges may thus be partly accounted for. But the population has not increased to the same proportion as the vast increase in the number of students in the colleges. Even the influx of refugee students from East

Pakistan would not fully explain the large increase in the student population. At the time of the Partition, the total number of colleges in West Bengal was 55, and today, within nine years, the total number has risen to 96. The total number of college students in 1947 was 36,232, today the total number in colleges is 87,374, of which nearly 50,000 are in Calcutta. The total number of senior and junior schools was 1,903 in 1947 and today it is 3,147.

It is obvious, therefore, that there is a strong desire and much anxiety on the part of the parents and guardians, and also of the students themselves, to get higher training in secondary schools and in colleges. The reason for this is that, according to our present system of recruitment for appointments by the State or private agencies, the possession of a university degree or diploma is insisted upon before a candidate is considered eligible for employment. The higher the degree possessed by the student, the higher the division which he has obtained, the greater are the chances of his getting appointed, with the result that there has been an anxiety on the part of every one to get higher training in order to be able to capture good jobs. A Committee has recently been appointed by the Government of India for the purpose of investigating whether it is necessary that university degrees should be prescribed as essential qualifications for all services and posts for which they are so prescribed at present. No student today can enter a medical college or an engineering college or a technical college unless he has passed the Intermediate Examination. The result is that, whether a student has the capacity or not to pursue the course of study in the college because of his backwardness in intellect or insufficiency of resources, he has somehow or other to manage to get through the higher courses of study in order that he might get into the professional colleges.

It is not surprising, therefore, that there is an undue rush for higher education and even those who have neither the aptitude nor the means, struggle to get the degrees. Then again such over-crowding leads to the lowering of the standard, both of teaching and examination. If I am teaching a class of two hundred students, a good majority of whom are backward, I have to lower the standard of my teaching in order to reach the least competent amongst the pupils, leaving the better qualified students to shift for themselves. If I become an examiner, I would naturally lower the standard

of my questions in order to accommodate the back-benchers. Thus the standard of proficiency of the passed student is lowered. Obviously, therefore, it is essential that the over-crowding of institutions should be done away with. As I have said, the institutions, where over-crowding exists, may have allowed it partly to meet the increasing demand for higher education. But it is equally true that in many cases they have allowed this pernicious system to persist because of the paucity of funds. If they restrict the number of students who seek admission, the authorities lose money with which to run the institutions. I do not say that all these institutions are run for pecuniary gains alone but they are forced by stress of circumstances to admit the largest number possible in order to find funds to run the institutions. In such cases the institutions become in effect commercial propositions.

I am told that in China they have a system which enables the authorities there to assess periodically the total needs of the country for employment as doctors, technologists, teachers, etc., and the admission to universities is restricted to the required numbers. I am afraid that, although a large number of our young men and women go in for higher training under stress of circumstances, even if they have not the capacity or economic resources for such training, it is not possible to restrict the admission to colleges, as is done in China. The problem may be tackled here in a different way. I am quite clear in my mind that sufficient scope for students to branch off at particular periods of their educational life into channels, which will enable them to earn a livelihood, will reduce the number of students going in for higher studies. The trend of recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission, the All-India Secondary Education Council and other academic bodies has been that a student should, after completing his course of instruction at the age of fourteen, be provided with a diversified course of three years before appearing at the School Final Examination. During these three years the teachers should be able to judge the capacity of the student and the student should also be able to know in what direction his aptitude lies. A personal reminiscence from my own life would not perhaps be very much out of place. I passed my Intermediate Examination a little after I was sixteen; I was considered too young to enter a professional life. I, therefore, drifted to the college classes.

In those days there were no separate Arts and Science courses. Even after I obtained my B.A. degree, my mind was absolutely blank as to my future career. I drifted from the school to the college because I had nothing else to do. I had no intention of entering the Government service which might have been open to me or of going in for law studies. I had my inhibitions about them. But I felt no positive urge for any definite career. I therefore applied for admission to the Engineering College and to the Medical College simultaneously. The acceptance of my application came from the Medical College authorities six hours earlier than the letter of admission from the Engineering College. By that time I had sent my admission fees to the Medical College. Thus, I might have been an engineer instead of being a doctor, if I had received my letter of admission to the engineering course a mere six hours earlier.

I mention this to show that in our days, and possibly even today, the aptitude of the student in the higher classes of a school or in a college was neither studied by the teachers nor understood by the student himself. The new multipurpose schools have, therefore, been devised to avoid aimlessness on the part of students. At the end of the School Final Examination quite a large number of students are to be diverted to different courses of study, technological, medical, engineering, arts and crafts, etc. Every student passing the School Final Examination need not go in for higher education in the universities. We should not forget, however, that much as we may condemn over-crowding and the present system of training in the colleges and higher schools, yet we need more engineers, more trained agriculturists, more craftsmen, more technologists, more doctors and more experts in the various departments of life. Therefore, restriction of higher education is not the remedy. On the other hand, it is my conviction that a properly educated person in any branch of learning would be a better citizen, a better social organizer, a better worker for any nation-building department. I found in Japan, where the percentage of literacy is very high, reaching a figure of about 95 per cent, that matriculates are employed as constables. An engine driver, I found, was a graduate of one of their universities; a technician in a workshop had received a fairly high education. In that country, they pay a great deal of attention to the education of the youth and spend nearly 30 per cent of the State revenue on education. The

teachers are handsomely paid and maintain direct touch with the students, both in the class-room as well as during the extra-mural activities. The teacher is the warden and guide of the students, directing their life in the school and outside as also solving their personal problems. Thus the youth in Japan today when he becomes a citizen tomorrow will already have been conscious of his duties and responsibilities to the State. In this respect there is much that we can learn from Japan.

Insufficient Housing Accommodation for Students

There is no doubt whatsoever that most of our students today live in very uncongenial surroundings which do not conduce to the development of their mind and body. Some professional colleges, like the medical colleges and engineering colleges, provide accommodation for a proportion of their students, and I think this is a move in the right direction. I know it is a great administrative and financial problem to provide accommodation for the students in healthy surroundings, make arrangements for proper cafetaria for them, provide them with common-rooms where they can meet and discuss burning problems of the day, arrange for a common dining-room where they can take their meals together, provide them with a place for indoor games as also arrange for outdoor sports so as to develop a spirit of comradeship which is essential for a wholesome and co-ordinated development of the students. I do not say that we shall be able to meet the cost of these amenities at once, but so long as the ideal is before us, it should not be difficult for us to reach it in time.

Defective Syllabus

The present syllabus, which has been prescribed for the students in the higher secondary schools and colleges, is apt to give a limited outlook to the student. He becomes bookish. The subject he studies does not get him in touch with the environment in which he lives. If he studies geography, he may commit to memory the names of mountains, the course of rivers and location of towns, etc., but he hardly has any knowledge of the people who live in those areas, nor does he care to understand how a particular community has developed in an area under particular geographical conditions. This is also true in case of history, mathematics or any other

subject. The syllabi of the subjects of study for students in the higher secondary schools and universities need reorientation. The Secondary Education Commission have reported as follows:

"In view of the fact that education up to the age of 14 has been made free and compulsory under the Constitution, students with a very wide variety of talents will be seeking education in future. This postulates that our secondary schools should no longer be 'single-track' institutions but should offer a diversity of educational programme calculated to meet varying aptitudes, interests and talents which come into prominence towards the end of the period of compulsory education. They should provide more comprehensive courses which will include both general and vocational subjects, and pupils should have an opportunity to choose from them according to their needs."

Thus the students will be impressed with the idea "that the book or the study within the class-rooms of traditional academic subjects is not the only door to the development of the personality and that in the case of many—perhaps a majority of the children—practical work, intelligently organized, can unlock their latent energies much more successfully than the traditional subjects which address themselves only to the mind, or worse still, to the memory". While a certain core of subjects of general value and utility may form the syllabus, special practical subjects can contribute to the all-round education of the students, making them productive, co-operative, well-balanced and useful members of the society. The Secondary Education Commission have thus indicated a correct approach to a solution of the problem.

Poor Pay of Teachers

Let us not forget that one of the major causes of inefficient teaching today is no doubt the fact that the teachers are poorly paid and their service conditions are very unsatisfactory. The State and the Society have not done their duty to the teachers. Their social status and prestige are very low. In the olden days the *gurus* felt that they belonged to a noble profession and acted as such. But that is not so today. They get starvation wages; their talents are also ignored. In desperation many teachers accept paid private tuition but this prevents them from paying proper attention

to their work in schools or colleges. The Secondary Education Commission have recommended that special committees should be appointed to review the scales of pay of teachers of all grades. The planners of the Second Five Year Plan have laid down that the provision of higher salaries for teachers should be accepted as a measure essential for the effective organization of any system of education. In Japan, the Corporations of the Prefectures, which control education, spend nearly 30 per cent of their total income on education. A primary school teacher gets a salary twice as high as a person of similar qualifications in other departments of life. Thus the teachers there are able to devote their entire energy to train students both inside the school and outside it. By employing satisfied and contented teachers and providing housing accommodation for them so that they may live near the students, Japan ensures that her teachers give their best to the students. The education of the student depends not merely upon what is taught to him through lectures, demonstrations and discussions, but on the influence of the personality of the teacher on the student. The proposal for upgrading the salaries of teachers would of course mean increased expenses but that would be worthwhile. In West Bengal, we have increased our total expenditure on education from Rs. 2½ crores in 1948 to Rs. 9 crores in 1955-56. I am perfectly sure it has to go higher still. We are faced with a conundrum. The economic backwardness of the country is responsible in part for this deficiency in education and yet the low level of economic development is itself in a measure the result of inefficient and faulty education. If you want to train students who will be effective citizens of the future and be able to carry the burden of the State, you require to have the best talented men amongst the intelligentsia to take charge of their education. They have to be paid suitable salaries. It is only thus that we can win back for the teachers their lost leadership and the respect and affection of their students.

Rural Universities

The above observations lead me to a subject which is very dear to me, namely, the development of the villages and an all-round improvement of the conditions of the people there, including the students. The villages of India are a vast reservoir of human energy, intelligence and aspiration,

much of which is now being wasted in futility. The Indian boys and girls start out in life alert, curious, eager to live and to learn, but when they go to the city for their education, its drab and unhealthy environment kills this spirit in many young men so that when they become old they become bitter and inept. Seventy-five to eighty per cent of our people live in villages. But if there be no proper provision for higher education in the villages for our young men and children, they naturally crowd together in the urban areas. After their period of education in urban schools they become reluctant to go back to the villages, as meanwhile they acquire a taste for urban life and an aversion to rural life. A vicious circle is thus produced which results in continuous depletion of talented youths from rural areas to the towns.

The logical solution of this problem is to have a net-work of rural universities for higher education in rural areas. Let me list below the advantages that would flow from their establishment:

1. Most of the existing institutions of higher learning are concentrated in urban areas. The result is that the abler students in the villages tend to drift to towns. We have noticed, in West Bengal for instance, that this move has resulted in the urban colleges being over-crowded while villages are being deprived of all persons of initiative and ability who are the natural village leaders and thus the condition of the villages has progressively deteriorated. No Five-Year Plan or Ten-Year Plan would succeed unless they include the development and progress of the rural areas, particularly in matters of education.

2. In these rural institutions the students will have opportunities for close contact with their teachers in healthy environment.

3. There will be offered to each student a wide range of specialized and advanced education which, while ensuring a general educational foundation, would also ensure the development of individual aptitudes and interests.

4. There will be less over-crowding in urban institutions.

5. In these rural institutions general studies should be linked up with practical courses so that those who attend them will become cultured and educated persons and also specialist in their chosen fields. There is at present a tendency in university circles to look upon the scheme of combining study

and work, specially those involving manual craftsmanship, as suited only to inferior intellects, while professional training is regarded as suitable for the intellectuals. This view is entirely wrong. The rural setting is a suitable environment for the employment of the full sway of human intellect.

6. Such combined type of education would make a young man able to handle important affairs in life, which require sound general knowledge, common sense and experience of the practical side of things.

7. The flexibility and adaptability of the programme of studies indicated above would allow modification of the syllabus to suit the changing needs and opportunities of Indian life. Intelligent appreciation of the current needs of pupils in different colleges and of the prospective supply of men to meet such needs will help in guiding a student's vocational choice and he will then be able to take his share in building the New India according to his capacity.

Two years ago a Rural Higher Education Committee was appointed to undertake a comprehensive survey and an appraisal of the existing institutions for higher education in rural areas. They have recommended the establishment of a rural university linked up with some rural institutes. According to their recommendation, a National Council for Higher Education in rural areas was brought into being this year with the Union Deputy Minister for Education as the Chairman, to advise the Government of India in all matters concerning the development of higher rural education. They have proposed to establish a few such institutes in different parts of the country. Thus the youth from these rural areas would not in future have to proceed to the urban areas for higher education. Incidentally the students will avoid the artificiality of the urban surroundings and mode of life. In the towns the air is contaminated and the food adulterated, which leads to nutritional defects. By having a rural institute for education, the students in the rural areas will stay in or near their homes and in natural healthy surroundings. This will also solve the baffling problem of providing accommodation for the large number of students that crowd the urban institutions. Then again if they remain in their own homes and receive education in normal surroundings, it would help in the development of their physical and moral life. Such a rural university should not be unwieldy. The total number of students living in such

universities should not be more than two to three thousand. It should have a central organization with extension institutes in different village areas under its control. It is possible that, while ensuring a general education foundation for a student, these extension institutes may provide for specialities to suit the taste or inclination of a student. The student will remain in natural and healthy surroundings and will be in closer touch with the world in which he lives. Besides study of a certain core of subjects of general value, they would study agriculture, animal husbandry, dairy farming, poultry farming and veterinary science so that the knowledge gained therein would be useful to them in their daily life. The young students may even attend to their agricultural pursuits along with instructions in these institutions.

In rural colleges and in rural institutes general studies should be combined with work so that students after studying in such an institution should become cultured and educated men and women and yet trained in some specialized subjects. It is on this basis that Gandhiji had outlined his concept of basic training. The method adopted by him was for the fulfilment and refinement of human personality which would stand the test of time and criticism.

I have pleaded for the development of rural areas and the provision for higher education therein. May I refer to the pregnant observations of the University Education Commission in this matter? They say:

"In the course of world history, seldom has the greatness of a nation long survived the disintegration of its rural life. For untold ages man by nature has been a villager and has not long survived in any other environment. Almost every study of the subject which has been made in Europe and America has revealed that as a rule city families survive for only a few generations. Cities grow and thrive only as they are constantly replenished from the rural population. So long as a nation's rural life is vigorous, it possesses reserves of life and power. When for a long time cities draw the cream of life and culture from the villages, returning almost nothing, as has been the case in India during the last two centuries, the current village resources of culture and energy become depleted, and the strength of the nation is reduced. India must decide whether to aim at widely distributed population making the villages more prosperous, interesting and culturally

rich places with such range of opportunities and advantages that young people will find more zest and interest, more cultural advantages, more opportunity for pioneering there, than in the city, or whether to industrialize the country and create city areas which would produce vast wealth but little culture. . . ." In West Bengal we have formulated and developed a scheme for Rural University in which students will be in the first instance taught only the subjects of interest to the rural areas. Besides agriculture, animal husbandry and veterinary science they will be given instructions in chemistry and physics applied to the above basic subjects. There should be opportunities for the students to have outdoor games and sports in the rural areas as also facilities for various types of social work. As you are aware, the recent floods in West Bengal have produced an awareness in our minds of the helpless condition of the rural areas and the urgent need for reconstruction of villages, physically, mentally and spiritually.

While planning for such Rural Universities, we cannot afford to neglect the present centres of learning, however imperfect they may be. There should be provision for continued development of the existing institutions. Money has to be found for buildings and sufficient equipments to make education more effective in these institutions. I am aware of the difficulties of the State in meeting all the demands which are being made today by institutions and universities on the public funds for bettering their conditions and the conditions of the students and the teachers. I appreciate that with our meagre resources priorities have to be fixed at a particular period to certain programmes. But I feel that the money spent for the proper education of our youths should not be regarded as an out-and-out expenditure but an investment that will yield a rich dividend in the years to come.

I have nothing more to add except to extend to all young men and women of this University my cordial greetings, and to appeal to them to gird up their loins and develop their personality so that they may leave their individual mark in whatever sphere they are privileged to serve. My young friends, you are the soldiers of the battle of freedom—freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom from ignorance, freedom from a sense of frustration and helplessness. By dint of hard work for the country

rendered in a spirit of selfless service, may you march ahead with hope and courage as torch-bearers of a peaceful revolution. Remember that in this dynamic world you must go forward, or else you will be left behind. May God be with you!

1956

Jadavpur University
Its Origin, Growth and Development

I CONSIDER myself very fortunate in being able to place before the House this Bill which represents the high ambition and the great vision of the men who influenced the people of Bengal, the leading lights who illumined this province in the latter part of the last century and in the beginning of the present. I personally knew most of those who took part in founding the National Council of Education and I take this opportunity of paying my tribute and homage to these great men. The years 1905 and 1906 are memorable in the history of Bengal because of the events that happened in those years. For a long time the thinking men in this province as well as in other parts of India had been feeling dissatisfied with the state of things in India, in different spheres of life—spiritual, intellectual, economic, political and educational. A bold step forward was necessary and an impetus for this was called for. The partition of Bengal effected by Lord Curzon provided this impetus. The imposition of partition on an unwilling country exhibited clearly how helpless we were. Men began to wonder if the ineffectiveness of the popular will against a governmental fiat was not due to the fact that we were becoming impotent mentally and otherwise because of the system of education which obtained in those days in the universities. The country wanted to be independent of governmental control and to discard the slavish imitation of Western culture in its activities. The people tried to apply their creative genius in the educational field and the first fruit of this attempt was the establishment of the National Council of Education. Thus it will be seen that a great zeal had impelled these great men to found the National Council. Every educa-

Speech delivered at the West Bengal Legislative Assembly on 16 September 1955, while moving that the Jadavpur University Bill, 1955 be taken into consideration.

tional institution worth the name should have its own ideals and traditions. Most of the Indian universities were brought into existence not in pursuance of any ideal by a single person or a group of persons but by the Government which started the educational institutions for administrative and political reasons. The institutions could, therefore, have no lofty ideals, but only catered to the advancement of knowledge from a utilitarian point of view ; culture was not one of the objectives of such institutions. Ideals and traditions were non-existent ; the authorities then controlling the universities did not identify themselves with the institutions. Many of the Indian universities during that period were merely institutions with a large number of affiliated colleges scattered all over the province or even over several provinces. It was not possible that in such circumstances they would have a common ideal. The result was that the students also did not have any particular loyalty to their colleges. No loyalty could be expected of them either, because all that they were called upon to do was to pay the fees with which the colleges were maintained and in exchange they got lessons to enable them to sit for university examinations after which their relations with the colleges ceased. In Bengal perhaps there were one or two colleges which were honourable exceptions to this general rule. The Brajamohan Institution at Barisal under Aswini Kumar Dutt and the Daulatpur Hindu Academy under Brajagopal Chakrabarty were among such exceptions. The Gurukul at Hardwar, the Santiniketan Ashram at Bolpur and the Fergusson College at Poona were also institutions each with an ideal. In those days the university authority consisted of soulless bodies like the Court, the Senate and the Syndicate, without any lofty vision.

If you look round the world, you will find that the pattern that we have here is merely a copy of what is happening even now in the United Kingdom. Except perhaps one or two unitary residential universities, the rest of the universities are more or less soulless. In Germany again the ideals and traditions are in existence only in the smaller universities like Heidelberg and Bonn. In America universities like Harvard, Yale and Princeton have been built up to develop a tradition.

The purpose for which the National Council of Education was started in 1906 was to impart education, literary and scientific as well as technical and professional, on national lines and exclusively under national control.

not in opposition to but standing apart from the existing system of primary, secondary and collegiate education, attaching special importance to knowledge of the country, its literature, its history and philosophy and designed to incorporate the best oriental ideals of life and thought with the best assimilable ideas of the West in order to inspire students with a genuine love for and an earnest desire to serve the country.

Sir, the Council is one of the monuments of constructive achievements of creative urge of the nation for Swadeshi education. Satish Chandra Mukherji and his well-known Dawn Society laid the moral foundation of the Council. The donation of Raja Subodh Chandra Mallik laid the corner stone of the institution. Two other donors, Brajendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury and Maharaja Suryya Kanta Acharyya Chowdhury Bahadur of Mymensingh, made handsome donations to the cause of national education. The Council was started with the princely munificence of these three founder-donors. Other notable persons like Aurobindo Ghosh, Rabindranath Tagore, Rashbehary Ghose, Satish Chandra Mukherji, Praphullachandra Ray, Gooroodas Banerjee, Asutosh Chaudhuri, Chittaranjan Das, Hirendranath Dutt, Benoykumar Sarkar, Devaprasad Sarvadhikary, Ramendrasundar Trivedi and others also became closely associated with this national Institution, either as teachers or paper-setters or counsellors. The selfless services rendered by these distinguished sons of Bengal made the establishment and development of the Council possible.

Simultaneously with the foundation of the National Council of Education, another institution was started for technical education in 1906. This was financed mainly by Tarak Nath Palit. In 1910 these two institutions were amalgamated. The Council maintained both Arts, and Science and Technical departments. Besides these departments, a large number of national schools were started in different parts of Bengal and were affiliated to the Council. The Council held different examinations corresponding to the Matriculation and the Intermediate Examination of the Indian universities and had centres of examination in far-off places like Agra, Amraoti, Bankipur, Banaras, Comilla, Dacca, Lahore, Poona, Rajshahi, Rangpur and Sylhet. Although the Council struggled hard to maintain all these three departments it was soon found that it was only the technical branch that attracted students.

In 1920, the National College was closed down : the School of Technology, however, continued to develop. For the last thirty years the Council has directed its main attention and employed all its resources to technical education, but humanistic studies are still included as parts of the engineering and technical courses of study. In 1921, the Council secured a donation of Rs. 13 lakhs under the will of Sir Rashbehary Ghose. The Council has received from time to time donations to the extent of Rs. 10 lakhs from other sources. The present site of the College of Engineering and Technology was leased out to the Council by the Calcutta Corporation. It has 192 bighas of land. Besides giving this plot of land the Corporation has been making, since 1927, an annual grant of Rs. 30,000. In 1946 the Government of Bengal made a capital grant of Rs. 3 lakhs and a recurring grant of Rs. 10,000, since increased to Rs. 70,000, for the development of the Chemical Engineering Department. The American Army authorities in India gave it in 1949 a very splendid workshop known as the Blue Earth ; the Government of India sanctioned a capital grant of Rs. 25 lakhs for equipments and buildings and an interest-free loan of about Rs. 16·41 lakhs for a students' hostel and a recurring grant up to a limit of Rs. 6 lakhs.

Sir, I now invite your attention to the Statement of Objects and Reasons for introducing this Bill which says:

"Degrees awarded by the National Council of Education are recognized by Calcutta University and the Union as well as the State Public Service Commissions. Their degrees are also recognized by some of the American and Continental universities. With the Independence of India, universities in Western countries, which are very advanced in technical education, have suggested that the degrees of the National Council of Education should receive statutory recognition by the State Government or by the Government of India, as the case may be."

The College of Engineering and Technology has been virtually functioning as a university. The reason for bringing this Bill before the House is to enable those who have graduated from this institution to obtain recognition which only a university can give.

Sir, there are certain special points about this institution which I must place before the House. First, this is one of the few institutions in the whole of India where there are Alumni Associations. A student who has

passed out from the College and has benefited by the training he received from the College has a permanent link with the institution, and actually these students have collected money for the purpose of founding a college. This, I believe, is a special trait which should be followed by other institutions in India because it provides a link between the present and the past students.

The second point is that it is a unitary institution and, as far as possible, it will be a residential university. We have accommodation for 500 boys out of a total of 1,200. Attempts are being made to have hostel accommodation for all the boys, particularly because in a technical college a student has to remain in contact with the teacher for practically the whole day. They begin their day early in the morning, going to various classes, both theoretical and practical ; they must also get their workshop training, which is needed so that the practical training may be thorough. One of the main difficulties, as we all know, of the present university education and the colleges working under a university has been that students very rarely come in touch with the authorities of the college, the teachers, the president or the principal ; also, the students have very little touch with the university as a composite body. In this institution we have advisedly avoided the provision for a Court, a Vice-Chancellor, a Syndicate and so on. They, to my mind, are not necessary for a unitary university which is mostly composed of residential students. I feel that the head of the university, call him by any name you like, should be in close touch with the students and mix with them in their daily life in order to enthuse them in their work and bring out the best that is in them. We have been accustomed to a particular formula for running universities. We now want to try some other formula. At present, as it goes, the National Council of Education and the College of Engineering and Technology are being governed by a Managing Committee with a President and a Rector. They have been working on this basis for many years and they feel that this direct touch among the teachers, the students and the authorities has been of very great value in developing a healthy atmosphere in this College. There is a general belief all over India that the boys of the Jadavpur Technological College are very capable and dutiful. In spite of many difficulties, in spite of the difficulty, for lack of funds, of providing the

students with enough laboratory and workshop facilities, those who have been trained there can stand on their own against their competitors trained elsewhere under better facilities.

I am dilating on these special features of this institution because we are trying to start on a new line to carve out a new method, and, if this method proves successful, it will revolutionize the system of education in our country. We deplore the present mentality of the students, but it is not the students alone who are to blame. Young men must be guided, they must be kept in touch with the ideals of the institutions and the teachers they are studying under; they must see that it is not merely for securing lucrative jobs that they receive their education and training. They should be made to realize the importance of education in character building.

We feel that, considering the scope and achievements of this College, it is essential that it should now be converted into a full-fledged University, retaining in view the ideals which the founders of the National Council of Education set before us and which have generally been followed in this College during the last fifty years. In order to receive any help from the University Grants Commission also, this conversion is necessary, for the Commission is empowered to extend any grant only to a university which should have more than one faculty. And in this institution we have, in addition to the Faculty of Engineering, the nucleus of a Faculty of Humanities. Also the Refugee Rehabilitation Department of the Central Government has agreed to give some financial help in opening a college for refugee students in the campus of this institution, where arts subjects will be taught.

At this formative stage of this University we feel that it would be better to place before the House a general outline of what the country expects it to do and then leave it to develop in its own way. The College has seen bad days and good days—more bad days than good days—because it has had for nearly twenty-five or thirty years to fight against great economic difficulties. Sometimes some kind-hearted donors have come in with generous help but even then it had often to cut down its activities, because of financial difficulties. We are hoping that with the grant which the Government of India is now giving, namely, Rs. 6 lakhs a year, it would

be possible for this University or the College to go ahead more or less smoothly. As far as I can see the total expenditures of the College per year is about Rs. 13 or 14 lakhs. The amount that we get from the Government of West Bengal and the grant from the Government of India, together with the fees collected from the students, will still leave a gap of over Rs. 2 or 3 lakhs a year. I can say without any fear of contradiction that the men who are working there are excellent, and the teachers are devoted to their tasks. They have been working under great strain and on meagre terms. It has not been possible to do for them what they only so much deserve. We hope to be able to do something for them as the ideas envisaged in the Bill are systematically implemented, and then they will feel more enthusiasm for their work.

1955

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SIR, I have today discharged my duty, the duty of paying tributes to those who conceived fifty years ago an institution which would be conducted by our own people and would have its own ideals and not the ideals of the other universities that then functioned. I am proud that I live to see the day when their vision has to a certain extent been realized.

As my friend Sri Bankim Mukherji has said, it is the beginning of the realization. If the University is to fulfil the aims and objects of the founders it has to go on struggling because without struggle a man's life becomes motionless. It is not for me to say whether I am to take part in the conduct of the institution. It is for the members of the University to say so. I have never put myself in a position of power unless I have been called to exercise authority, and I felt that it was my duty to put my shoulder to the wheel. But apart from any personal aspect I feel that it is on the students and the teachers of the College, those who will conduct the University in future, that the great responsibility of realizing the dreams of the founders will devolve.

Concluding remarks on the Jadavpur University Bill, 1955, 22 September 1955

We have in framing this Bill departed from the usual system of having Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors, Courts, etc. This has laid on the University a greater responsibility. If this University, this unitary and teaching University, proves successful, other Universities, I am perfectly sure, in this State as well as in other States of India, will follow suit. For such unitary and teaching Universities to be successful, there should be understanding and co-operation between the teachers and the taught.

I have noticed often enough, and I say this with some amount of confidence because I am in touch with some other institutions also, that the students of Jadavpur University and its teachers have got a deeper love and affection for their University than is to be found among the students and teachers elsewhere. May this spirit spread far and wide.

1955

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I THINK it would not be out of place on this occasion to recall the origin of this University. This institution was started by the great men whose busts you see behind, who in their times led the country in thought and action ; they felt that it was desirable to have an institution where they would impart education, literary as well as scientific and technical, on national lines and exclusively under national control. I do not know what dreams those great men dreamt in those days about the future of this country. Did they then realize that a time would soon come when after the achievement of independence it would be necessary to provide the country with people trained to undertake the task of building up new India, not merely in the purely technical sense, not merely in a purely engineering sense, but by raising a band of people who would be national in their outlook and dedicated to the future development of the country? For political freedom means nothing unless it is based upon economic freedom and economic freedom cannot be achieved unless we have people who can build up the basis for it. It was once thought that engineering and techno-

Address delivered at the Convocation of Jadavpur University, 24 December 1961.

logy were subjects which should not be mixed up with humanities, the teaching of history, philosophy and other cognate subjects, with mathematics or pure science. That was the view of most of the university men in the middle of the last century. But gradually it was found that a technical man would be a better technical man if he was trained in the humanities, a technical man would be a better technical man if he knew history and geography. This institution, therefore, deliberately took upon itself the task of imparting education not merely in technical and engineering subjects but also in the arts and science subjects.

The quality of an educational institution may, I think, be judged by its success in bringing out the best in its students, and this no doubt depends to a very large extent upon the mutual love and esteem that develop between its students and teachers. Such love and esteem are imponderable things and you cannot judge them by any statistical methods. You must have seen the procession of the old graduates of this institution a little while ago. What does this signify? It signifies that those boys who had their education and training here have not forgotten their old college; they remember the love and affection with which the teachers had taught them in the past and they are still attached to the institution. The virtue of an institution depends upon the love that it fosters between the teachers and the taught on the one hand and the love that it creates for learning on the other. Mere passing an examination is not of much importance and this institution aims at bringing out the best in the individual in every sense.

On this occasion I must refer to certain developments that took place in this institution during the last year. In 1960 this University was particularly busy. This being the closing year of the Second Five-Year Plan period, the tempo of developmental work was evidently accelerated. Some of the schemes, which had been adopted earlier, were completed during the period and others had been taken up for implementation before the end of the Second Plan period. New schemes were submitted during the period to the University Grants Commission and the State Government. These are well on their way to materialization within the next few months. Apart from the construction of new buildings, purchase of books and equipments and the appointment of staff for development purposes during

the period, it also engaged itself in the academic and extra-academic activities of students and the staff. Of the new buildings which were completed and put to use during the period may be mentioned the buildings for science classes for engineering students, extension of the science and arts undergraduate building, the Health Centre building and two new blocks for accommodation of men and women scholars. It has not however been possible to put the Health Centre into commission as the necessary funds for the equipment and running cost have not yet been sanctioned. The installation of equipments in the hydraulics laboratory was completed and the formal opening took place recently; the building had been completed last year. The building for accommodation of the post-graduate course in Food Technology has been completed and it is expected that the equipments will be installed and the building put to use within the next two months. The construction of the post-graduate science building has made considerable progress. It is expected that within the next few months construction of the post-graduate arts building, the staff quarters, printing press, Mechanical Engineering building and the building for the five-year integrated course in engineering will begin.

During this period, the University received sanction of grants of a capital nature amounting to Rs. 17 lakhs, of which 1·70 lakhs were for books, 9·8 lakhs for equipments, 5·40 lakhs for building, besides 13·33 lakhs to meet some of its outstanding liabilities. The salary scales of the teachers in the Faculty of Engineering have been revised during this period to bring them on per with the scales obtaining in the major engineering institutions in the country. Jadavpur is one of the six Universities which have been selected by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for the establishment of a Plan Information Centre.

A centre for the study of Indian heritage and culture has also been started in the University with donation of books and money from the Bengal branch of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi. A unit of the World University service has been formed and a donation of Rs. 3600/- has been received for helping students who suffered in the floods and also for the running of the students' canteen.

The intake of students in the part-time degree course has increased from 60 to 90 with effect from the session 1960-61. The part-time degree course

and the refresher course are intended to give training to those who have already received a diploma of a lower standard. At the suggestion of the University Grants Commission, the University has agreed to introduce the five-year integrated course in Applied Geology leading to the degree of Master of Technology in place of the existing three-year undergraduate and two-year post-graduate courses in Geological Sciences. With effect from the 1960-61 session the University has instituted certificate and diploma courses in Sanskrit, French, German and Russian. The first batch of students in the undergraduate course in Civil Engineering and the first batch of students in post-graduate course in Food Technology will be coming out this year.

The University has been equally active in promoting extra-curricular activities. With a grant from the University Grants Commission a film club has been set up with the staff and students of the University as members.

The University has also constituted a dramatic club which staged Shakespeare's *Hamlet* on the 11th April 1960. Two Rifle units were set up, one for boys and one for girls. The University has at present seven different N.C.C. Units with 640 students including 40 girls. I understand from the Rector that the aim is to try and make joining N.C.C. compulsory for all students. Three students of the University were adjudged best cadets in the technical units in West Bengal and won the Governor's Gold Medal.

Two new students' journals, a literary journal by the engineering and an annual journal by the geology students, were published. At present there are five different journals brought out by the students of this University.

This year there are 2,786 students on the roll including 112 pre-University students and 168 students in part-time degree courses. There are 513 students in the post-graduate and 2,273 students in the undergraduate courses. There are 489 students in Science and 532 in Arts and 1,756 students in Engineering. Research activities in the University have increased during this period and a number of schemes from the CSIR and the Government of West Bengal, including the Research Training Scholarship Scheme, have been taken up. In collaboration with the Reserve Bank of India a scheme for survey of small-scale industries in the district

of Howrah has been taken up. Two of the patents that the University had taken up earlier were licensed by the National Research Development Corporation for commercial exploitation. A research scheme for the study of the number of immigrants and their impact on the economy of West Bengal has been drawn up to be implemented with the assistance of Population Council Inc. of New York.

The Chemical Engineering Department of the University has been chosen as one of the extra-mural centres for research by the Central Fuel Research Institute. The Jadavpur is one of the ten Universities that have been selected by the University Grants Commission for the setting up of Industrial Estates. The object of the scheme is threefold:

1. To wean away the students from the habit of seeking white-collar jobs and fit them for skilled trade work;

2. To increase the number of skilled workers; and

3. To provide means of earning while learning. One acre of land has been allocated in the University campus on which it is proposed to put up shops for (i) Metal finishing, consisting of electroplating, anodyzing, enamelling, painting, etc. (ii) General Engineering, consisting of Machine shop, Press shop, etc. (iii) Electrical Workshop with arrangements for winding of coils for motor fans, etc., making of regulators and starters, making of chokes, resistance, etc. (iv) Screws, nuts and bolts manufacturing units (v) electrical low tension porcelain making units. It is proposed to take up the manufacture of Mathematical instruments, ancillary to the National Instrument Factory, and of small electric motors and electric fan parts as ancillary to the Jay Engineering Works.

The University has 286 teachers in the different Faculties, of whom 10 are women. Of these there are 115 teachers in the Engineering, 96 in the Science and 76 in the Arts Faculties. There are 15 foreign students in the University this year, of whom 7 are from Nepal, 2 from Burma, 5 from Ceylon and 1 from Pakistan. Teachers of all the Departments are engaged in research and a large number of papers have been published in different learned journals. Degrees are going to be conferred on 459 candidates this year, of whom the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is going to be conferred on 10. It may be mentioned here that the first Master's degree in Civil Engineering is being conferred this year.

The University is very grateful to all the donors who have endowed the University with funds for the award of medals and enriched the University library with gifts of books. To the students who have just passed out as well as the students who have graduated in previous years I say that it is not enough for them that they have obtained medals and certificates, it is necessary for them to obtain medals in the context of life, by working for the country. Remember we have almost gone through two five-year plans, and are going in for the third plan. In order to make this plan successful the country requires the assistance of students who are equipped with necessary knowledge and training. I call upon you therefore to devote yourselves to the service of your country. I wish you all success. May God bless you. Jai Hind.

1961

Applauds the awarding of the degree of Doctor of Law (*honoris causa*) to C. Rajagopalachari, the first Indian Chancellor of Calcutta University at a Convocation of the University held in 1948. *L to R* Dr C. Rajagopalachari, Dr Meghnad Saha, Chancellor K. N. Katju, Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy.

Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, President, Jadavpur University, awarding a medal [illegible]
Dr Sarvepalli Radha[illegible]

Awarding the degree of Doctor of Science (*honoris causa*) to Professor Satyendranath Bose at a Convocation of Jadavpur University, 1958
l to R Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, President of the University ; P. C. V. Mallik, Registrar ; Dr Triguna Sen, Rector ; Professor Satyendranath Bose

Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, Chairman, Board of Governors, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, awarding the President's Gold Medal to P. R. Srivastava, a graduate in Mechanical Engineering, at a Convocation held on 24 January 1957.

Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur

Dr Radhakrishnan, Dr J. C. Ghosh, members of the staff, members of the Convocation, and friends:

You have heard just now from Dr J. C. Ghosh that this Institute has been regarded as an Institution of National Importance. I was wondering why the Parliament thought it fit to consider this Institute to be one of National Importance. Is it because it is doing valuable work for the country which is now being reconstructed? I also wondered whether the character which these words "National Importance" convey is not reflected in the type of teachers and students which we possess. Look at the array of teachers we have they represent not one country, not one ideology, and yet they are together here for setting an example to the students to live up to certain standards which should make them useful citizens of this country. Similarly, the students are drawn from all parts of India and they represent a cross-section of the people of India. Therefore, it is really fitting that the Parliament should have thought it fit to regard this Institute as one of National Importance.

While driving round the area I had a feeling of pride within me. When Dr Ghosh came to me six years ago asking the Government to donate this area, I agreed with some reluctance, but I did not realize that Dr Ghosh was a builder of this type. I always thought he was only a professor doing quiet work in his laboratory, eager to impart knowledge to students, but having looked at the campus I realized what a creative mind he had. He has been able to build up an institution here which, I am sure, will in future years grow bigger and bigger.

I have heard it said that some of the members of the staff feel rather aggrieved that this Institute has been given a large measure of autonomy

Addresses of the Chairman of the Board of Governors at the annual Convocations.

and that this Institute which has been working under the aegies of the Government of India with its funds, etc. should be transferred to a semi-independent body by an Act of Parliament. Some of them might have some doubts as to their future. I can assure them and I believe that the provisions of the Act are quite clear on the point that so far as the terms and conditions of their service are concerned, they will all be safeguarded.

Some members of the staff feel sore on the ground that while under the previous regime it was possible for a member of the staff to appeal to the Home Minister in case of any difficulty, here he can only appeal to a Tribunal. To this I can only say that it has surprised me. Those of us who are in the Government know what it means to have to appeal to another Government for the remedy of some defect. Here is a Tribunal as suggested in the Act which consists of one representative of the staff, one representative from the Institute and one selected by the Chairman. Here is a Tribunal where they can appeal, place their case and get their grievances remedied.

At the formative stage the Government had to undertake the responsibility of establishing this Institute, and they have done it. Both the original Director, who was responsible for bringing this Institute into being, and the new Director have said that this Institute has now passed the teething stage. Therefore, it is time that the Institute was given a measure of autonomy under the provisions of a Central Parliamentary Act. I hope that it would not create any misgivings in the mind of any person here. I have no doubt about the future of the Institute, the foundation of which has been well-laid, thanks to the efforts of the Directors and the staff. It has already established its reputation in the country. I do not see why it should not have some amount of freedom of work.

This Institute has different departments. The Director, the staff and the academic council have put forward some proposals for a number of new branches of learning. Dr Ghosh has told you that there are certain departments which require serious consideration from every one concerned.

When you talk about research it should not necessarily mean fundamental research ; research should also mean how the findings of knowledge gained in a particular field can be usefully employed under the conditions that you have in this country. Having regard to our resources, our stock

of raw materials and the environmental conditions of this country, the research need not necessarily be academic. Research must also be practical which will make a substantial contribution to the building up of the country.

You, the students of this Institute, who have obtained degrees today are to be congratulated because you also join the rank of those volunteers who are prepared to take their share in the building of the new India. I hope by your skill and your character, by your steadfast work and your devotion to the cause of the nation you will justify the description of this Institute as an Institution of National Importance.

24 January 1957

SRI GHANDY, members of the Institute, teachers and students of the Institute, ladies and gentlemen:

We cannot forget that Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, whom we lost early this morning, was closely associated with this Institute as he was the Minister of Education during the whole of the formative period of this Institute. We deeply mourn his death.

We have today amongst us a renowned economist, a leading public man of India, Dr John Matthai, who has occupied important positions in the Government, in the industry and in the academic field. He is now the Vice-Chancellor of Kerala University. We are very fortunate in having him amongst us today, and I am sure we will all profit by his advice.

The Director of the Institute has told you just now that this Institute has certain specialities. One of the specialities, I think, is its residential character so that the teachers and the taught may meet not merely in the class-rooms but also outside the class-rooms. This is very important. If this Institute is to take its share in the welfare of the country, it is necessary that the students should not regard themselves as isolated beings, isolated from the main currents of life. This aspect has received due emphasis here. In its development projects it has also kept in view the needs of the country. If you want to develop this country, you must have people who can build it, not in the narrow sense of the expression but build it in all its aspects,

build the nation as well as the country's industrial and technological base so that we might contribute our share to the development of the country as a whole. With this end in view this Institute has opened up new departments. If you have got to start steel industry you must have technicians who know about metallurgy, if you want to have your own navy you must know how to build ships, if you want to have townships you must have people who can give advice as to how the townships are to be planned and built. Incidentally, I requested Professor Prosad of this Institute to take up the problem of developing a township in the newly developed industrial area of Durgapur and I am glad to say that the students of this Institute under the guidance of their teachers are working at the various aspects of the problem. If you want more power-plants you must have more electrical engineers. If you want to have more food you must have people who know about agricultural engineering and I am glad that this Institute has started that department. If you are to exploit your country's mineral resources you must have mining engineers. We want to increase the production of coal, production of manganese, and other minerals. How can you do it unless you offer training in mining in some institute or the other? This Institute gives facilities to study all these subjects and I am perfectly sure that when a problem comes up this Institute will respond to the challenge and produce the technicians who will be able to take up the problem and solve it.

Talking about the students, I find from the report that, while the total number of entrants for the ordinary graduate courses is increasing, we do not have proportionate increase in the demand for post-graduate classes, research scholarships or post-doctorate fellowship. Obviously, before a student finds time to join any of these specialized classes his services are taken up by various bodies that employ them. It is a good thing in a way that the industry as well as the Government are able to provide employment for boys but that is not enough. The graduates to be really useful to the country will have to devote more time to post-graduate and research work. What a student learns in undergraduate courses is not enough ; he learns in text-books what others have found out in other countries. He should also learn to apply his knowledge to the facts of the situation in which he lives, the country in which he works. Therefore, arrangements

have to be made by which these boys might get better facilities for studying advanced courses.

We have the difficulty of finding teachers. It is all very well to increase the number of subjects to be taught, it is all very well to have students who want to take these subjects, but where are we going to have the teachers from? We have some teachers from various countries abroad. We have professors from America, from USSR and other countries to help us, but they come here for a very short period. What we need is to have more teachers who will remain permanently on the staff of the Institute.

The second point which was made by the Director is that we need to have a closer contact with industry. In fact the very existence and development of industry will depend on the extent of scientific and expert advice and help it can get. Therefore, it should be possible to make some arrangements by which you can get closer contact with the industries, even during the period when people are in training. I believe we have spent a little over two and a half crores of rupees in building and about another crore and a quarter in equipments, and I believe the present expenditure per year is about Rs. 50 lacks. They are colossal sums in a way but they are nothing compared to the needs of the country. The difficulties are there. As the Director has said, the present proposal before the Government of India is to have three more Higher Institutes of Technology in different parts of the country, a proposal which had been accepted very far back and has to be given effect to now as soon as possible. Hence, the Government of India may find it difficult to maintain the development of this Institute in all directions. Therefore, we have got to think of a method of developing the resources of this Institute.

I have nothing more to add except to tell the students of this Institute that they have the opportunity not only of getting instructions from their teachers in their respective subjects, but, what is more important, they have also the opportunity of associating with one another, of having knowledge of each other's mind and perhaps of imbibing each other's qualities. It is a good thing that this Institute draws students from all parts of the country. It is an all-India organization and therefore it is very easy for the students coming from the different parts of the country to know each other and

know their country. In this way this Institute will be a source of unity and strength to this country. I wish the graduates all success in their life.

22 February 1958

MISS NAIDU, Director of this Institute, students, ladies and gentlemen:

We have today amongst us a very important person. He is the head of the State, Dr Rajendra Prasad. He has been one of the most brilliant students of Calcutta University and his contribution to the development of this State has not been negligible. He has taken the trouble, in spite of other preoccupations, to come here and preside over the convocation today.

This is the fifth time that I am addressing the convocation at Kharagpur. As I look around and watch the faces of the persons who have gathered here today, I find there are many who do not belong directly or indirectly to this Institute. What have they come here for? It seems to me that they realize the importance of this institution in promoting industrial self-sufficiency. This institution is indeed unique. You have just seen men belonging to different parts of the country who have gathered together, got their training, and obtained their diplomas and certificates of merit. You have here students from all parts of India and some from outside of India. That is one important point about this Institute. It makes no distinction with regard to geography. Secondly, and that is a very important thing to my mind, here students, both undergraduates and post-graduates, and research workers, the teachers and the taught live together on the same campus. In some places elsewhere we have a great deal of discontent amongst the students, because there is little touch between the teacher and the taught. It is not enough that the students should learn from books, should hear the lectures and profit by them and should work in the laboratories and get information therefrom; but they should also follow the examples of the teachers. Here really lies a great responsibility on the teachers. If they cannot enthuse the boys they are not successful in their vocation.

What is the good of 1800 students living together on the same campus with the teachers unless they all know the value of social contact between

one person and another? People may differ from one another in their habits, their mode of life, their outlook and their approach, and yet, living together, they smooth over the angularities and become more or less a social unit.

It is a good thing that you have given the pride of place to agricultural engineering. I am glad to hear that you have got in your syllabus the course of town planning also. Geology and geophysics have been very rightly given sufficient emphasis particularly in a State like West Bengal. We have not got much of land—we have not got in this State forest wealth but we may have the treasure that lies hidden under the earth. I am positive that this State will develop if we exploit its natural mineral resources. I have been wondering whether it was proper that we should go on expanding this Institute. As you know, we have got undergraduate courses, post-graduate courses, and an extensive research programme. You cannot have a post-graduate course unless, along with it, you have research work going on. But I was wondering whether we were not producing too many engineers. To that my reply is quite clear. They are not superfluous, if each individual thinks that he is a unit in the whole scheme of production of the country and if each individual, after going out of the college, becomes an entrepreneur. When a man comes and tells me that he has not got this equipment or that because of foreign exchange, I feel very disheartened. It is possible that the quality of goods produced in this country may not be of the right type but we must begin somewhere and we must find our own equipment.

I ask every student who has passed out to think for himself, to find for himself how to get over the difficulties. The difficulties are there. The difficulties will always be there and I am glad that there are difficulties, for they excite imagination, they excite a man's intellect and you can then find out the means by which you can solve the problems.

I hear of students passing out from this Institute or from the Jadavpur Technical College wanting to go to Europe for further training. It so happens that many of the European Governments are giving scholarships to our students to go there and to learn their techniques. To these students I would say this from my personal experience: Do not try to go abroad till you have learnt what is available in this country. You must know what

you have got and what are your difficulties and then go out. Otherwise, what happens is this. When a student goes out he gets into an area where there are a large number of very efficient equipments, for he goes to an organization or industry which has developed over a large number of years. He naturally thinks in terms of reproducing them when he comes back. He feels very disappointed because he has got neither the equipments nor the money. It is always true that our country is not like a European country. We are not industrialized, ours is more or less an agricultural country and probably it will remain so for many years to come. Therefore, you will have to adjust yourself to Indian conditions. I say to the students, do not be lured by offers of scholarships from outside, because I am perfectly sure that very often when they come back they feel frustrated. Therefore, I will appeal to everyone to try and develop the techniques in his own way, in his own sphere. Boys have come here from all parts of India. It is for them to go out and develop the small industries. We have a number of big industries, but they are rather few for a big country like ours. We have got to multiply the small ones as well as the big ones and, as far as possible, to try to integrate the big ones with the small ones.

I wish those who have obtained certificates and awards of merit to be pioneers in production and industry. I hope and trust that every one of us will help them in the best possible way.

28 December 1959

Mr Mehta, Dr Sen Gupta, members of the Board of Governors, professors of the Institute, students, visitors and friends:

You have done me an honour by expressing your joy on the conferment of 'Bharat-Ratna' on me. I can assure you that I have done nothing more than any one of you. What I have been doing has been in the interest of the country which is ours.

You have amongst you today Sri Gaganbihari Lal Mehta who has, at some sacrifice, agreed to preside over this Convocation. We have always tried to get the best men to come to this Institute so that the students belonging to the Institute could know our great men and derive inspiration from them

for doing something big and noble. Mr Mehta himself is a big industrialist. This is an age of industrialism and I think it is only fit and proper that he should preside on this occasion.

This Institute has been working for the last ten years. I was looking at the chart given on the last page of this report which shows that the Institute began with 210 students. Today its student population is 1796. Not only the number is big but what is more significant, students come from all parts of India. My friend, the Director, says that they are living here in amity. I should add that the whole country is agog with enthusiasm for the purpose of developing the country. What is a Technological Institute for unless it trains people for the purpose of taking over the charge of the future development of the country. You see here professors belonging to different parts of this country and other countries too. The distinction of this Institute lies not merely in the number of students and the variety of students but also in the variety of subjects that have been taken up. The various subjects which this Institute has gradually taken up for study shows that the Institute is alive to the needs of the country today. You may ask why Naval Architecture is taught in this Institute. The fact is that every individual in this country ought to have some pursuit or other through which he can serve the country. We want for our development projects dam engineers, we want mining engineers, we want agricultural engineers, we want road engineers, we want electronics engineers, and we want engineers of all types and forms. The country cannot get along unless all these engineering faculties are developed.

My friend, the Director, has said that the Agricultural Engineering students did not get much opportunities of service. All I can say is that the country is anxious—let me tell you with some amount of responsibility —the country is anxious to increase its food production. I can give you only one small example. In the Second Five-Year Plan we invested for agricultural subjects and agricultural engineering a sum of Rs. 6·8 crores. Whereas in the next Five-Year Plan we have put Rs. 68 crores for agricultural engineering and food production. Why? Because we know that without food a man cannot live, we know that unless we increase production in our own country we have to import food. We also know that our foreign exchange position is such that we cannot go on importing food

for all time to come. Dr Sen Gupta is sad because the Third Five-Year Plan Budget is threatened to be cut down. All I can say is that let him hope for the best because I feel it is no use losing our hopes. We in our Government also do not get what we want from the Centre, the Centre also does not get what it needs for providing the necessary assistance and so we cannot go beyond a certain limit. Our resources, our physical resources will not permit it. Yet I think that no institution which is doing real work and giving service to the people would suffer from want of funds in the long run. In this connection, I would like to say—I do not know whether there are many industrialists present here, probably not—if there are, they should remember that such a teaching institute is for their benefit. They benefit because when they start new enterprises and new lines of action they would work through the students passing out of this Institute. Therefore, they should be prepared to come forward and give help as much as possible. As you know, we are working for a big programme in the Third Five-Year Plan and I can assure you that every able-bodied person who has got brains would be essential for the development of the country. Therefore I would ask the students who have passed out not to get discouraged. I would like to mention one point for their consideration: Do not think that everyone passing out from here will get an employment. They should be the centre of employment. I can assure you that they can do it. Only yesterday I met two boys who had earlier come to me four or five years ago. They are refugees from East Pakistan, but they are engineers. They brought me some very beautiful things which they are doing for the last three or four years. They told me that they started with a capital of Rs. 88 only and I think they are now producing things worth lakhs because they have the knowledge and because they have stout hearts. I would request you that if you are road construction engineers or mining engineers, do not go in for appointments ; show the present industrialists and the capitalists that it is possible for every one of you to earn sufficient money to maintain yourself, your friends and relations. Try to develop your country. It is not merely through the big industries that the country would develop. Big industries are necessary for the purpose of developing small industries and medium industries. It is the medium industries and the small industries that really would solve our problems. It is

possible that the big industries may attract people. But, really, the more I think about it the more am I convinced that the small and the medium cottage industries, those that produce consumer goods, are essential in the present situation of the country; it will at any rate check inflation to a certain extent. We, in this State of West Bengal, have put one hundred crores in the Third Five-Year Plan for various industrial developments. We are putting up two big thermal power plants which would cost us about Rs. forty crores. We are putting up a fertilizer plant, and another coke oven plant. We are also putting up a chemical products plant. Why? Because through this medium of cheap power and through the medium of various primary materials we might produce small industrial entrepreneurs. Who are these small entrepreneurs? They are the people who have the technical know-how and they know how to put the raw materials into finished product. I would urge everyone to cease thinking in terms of appointment, post, salary, etc. We should all identify ourselves with the mighty efforts of the nation to produce more. Ultimately only increased production can lead to the formation of capital. We are no more in that stage of economic development when capital, accumulated only by a few, was sufficient for further progress. We need capital not merely in terms of money, but capital in terms of your ability to serve the country, capital in terms of your mind and body through which only you can be efficient agents of production in this country.

I wish this year's graduates and post-graduates all prosperity in life. I hope and trust that everyone will remember the vow that they have taken just now, viz. that they will always endeavour to be scrupulously honest in the discharge of their duties as engineers and scientists. Remember there is a great danger for the technicians in the world today, because in the present world the so-called politicians employ engineers for their nefarious purpose; they must not be allowed to do so. To prevent it you should be scrupulously honest. Your intelligence, your knowledge and wisdom are for the purpose of developing your country and not for the purpose of destroying other countries or subordinating other countries. You have also said that you shall try to uphold the dignity of the individual and the integrity of the profession. I hope everyone of you will try to enhance the dignity of man both singly and collectively. I wish you all success.

4 February 1961

DR ZAKIR HUSSAIN, DR SEN GUPTA, visitors, guests, students and teachers of the Institute:

This is the seventh convocation at which we are meeting. On each such occasion we have the privilege of having a prominent and outstanding personality who comes here and addresses the convocation. This year we have been fortunate in having Dr Zakir Hussain, an eminent educationist, a very prominent administrator, and above all a good man and therefore it is a pleasure and a privilege to have him here to preside on an occasion such as this. Those who have been watching this Institute grow from a small beginning and expand in all directions, have realized the benefits which such an institution gives and is likely to give in future to the country. This Institute has a distinct advantage: people from all parts of India gather together; students from the north, south, east and west gather together and live here as close associates. This is one type of integration about which our leaders are talking so often. It is an integration through understanding each other's problems, integration through knowing how the minds of men are working in the different parts of the country.

The Parliament has passed a new Act called the Institutes of Technology Act, 1961 which supersedes the provisions of the Indian Institute of Technology (Kharagpur) Act, 1956 and the Visitor has given his assent to it. This Act is meant to cover the Indian Institutes of Technology in Bombay, Madras, Kanpur as well as this Institute. It is understood that the Act will come into force from 1 April 1962. The important provisions of the Act are: (a) a Central Council should be established mainly to decide upon broad policies and for ensuring co-ordination amongst the different Institutes I have mentioned just now; (b) a Board of Governors for each of the Institutes will be constituted in which there will be several experts from the regions as well as two professors of the Institute; and (c) a Senate would replace the present Academic Council of the Institute. The Board of Governors have decided to revise the salary scales of Professors, Assistant Professors and Lecturers to the corresponding scientific scales created under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.

The Rolls Royce Co. Ltd., England, have kindly decided to donate an electronic microscope to the Institute at a cost not exceeding £ 15,000/-. This is a gift which followed the visit of Mr Pearson of the Rolls Royce

Co. Ltd. early in 1961 to this Institute. Our Defence Minister Mr Krishna Menon has taken an active interest in this gift. Our thanks are due to the Rolls Royce Co. Ltd. as well as to Mr Krishna Menon.

Before I proceed further I desire to thank you for having recognized my little service in the last election. When I was in the midst of the election campaign I never forgot the fact that I was one of the soldiers of the Congress and it was my duty to place before the people the ideology of the Congress.

You will notice that from time to time various Professors come here and work in close co-operation with the staff. You will also notice that on similar basis the students and the teachers of this institution go to other countries for the purpose of learning what they have not learnt here. Science is nobody's monopoly and it is essential in this era of science that there should be complete and constant exchange of views and ideas. It cannot be the privilege of certain people in certain places. It is science which reveals what is true in life and science can never be something which you can eschew. In this connection I may tell the student graduates as well as the teachers that it is their privilege to be associated with the development of the country so far as science and technology are concerned. If you look to the various subjects in which students have obtained degrees or diplomas, you will find that the subjects cover a very wide field. I would like my friends, the young friends, who have come here today and obtained their coveted degrees and diplomas, to remember that the country, of which they are a part and parcel, cannot establish itself on a solid foundation unless it is able to produce more in all fields. The more you produce, the more confidence you get in yourself. We must learn to stand on our own legs and use our hands and brains for the purpose of getting all that we need in this country, whether in the shape of heavy industry or in the shape of medium industry or in the shape of consumer goods. Therefore I ask my young friends to go out as soldiers for the benefit of the country. They must of course earn their living, but the idea should be embedded in their minds that they should form regiments for the purpose of production. If we do not produce, we perish. Today India has started planning for production because on that basis alone we can develop our country. We should remember that the country is watching the development of this

institution because they have realized the value of technology in human affairs. Therefore, I would say your work has begun now and you are to apply what you have learnt in the interest of the country as a whole. I wish you all success and I hope all friends who are present here will convey to our graduates their good wishes and blessings. I hope and trust that this Institute will grow so that people will realize that we are devotee of science and we want to employ science for the good of humanity.

18 March 1962

SCIENCE AND SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT

Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy was devoted to Science by training and temperament, and the many schemes initiated by him during his stewardship of West Bengal indicate that his constant aim was to utilize the latest developments of Science for the affairs of everyday world in order to make life fuller and to secure such happiness as material things can promote.

In the two addresses printed here, Dr Roy discusses the relation between Science and Morals in the first; and in the second, he gives an account of progress of research in the field of chemotherapy, and indicates certain lines of research for Indian scientists, designed to develop the resources of the country for the benefit of the people.

The Scientist's Responsibility

THIS SESSION of the Association, as is its custom, will deal with the work of various departments of Science. This University[1], as most of you are aware, has for the last thirty years been trying to provide facilities for its students, research workers and professors, to enable them to investigate problems affecting all branches of human thought and endeavour. We were able to provide for subjects dealing with Philosophy and History, Literature and Ethics much earlier than those dealing with Science and Technology. I do not say that we have yet touched the fringe of the problem but the establishment of this Science College gave a great impetus to our men, gifted with initiative and determination and will to conquer, to probe deeply into the mysteries of nature and its laws for the benefit of humanity, and such activities have not been merely confined to laboratories. Non-official industrial concerns and the Government were quick to realize the value of the work being conducted here. During the last few years, a large amount of work has been done in the departments of Physics and Applied Physics, of Chemistry and Applied Chemistry, of Zoology and Botany, some of which have obtained universal recognition. Many of these investigations were undertaken at the instance of and with some contributions from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research of the Government of India, the Bengal Industrial Board, the Geological Survey of India and the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research. Non-official commercial bodies like the Burmah Oil Co. have also sought the help of this institute. As soon as the problems, set before our workers by these agencies, had been satisfactorily solved by them, the results became available to the principals. In this manner, the practical application of

From the welcome address by the Chairman, Reception Committee, Indian Science Congress, Thirtieth Session, Calcutta, 2 January 1943.

[1] Calcutta University.

science to the affairs of everyday world serves to make life fuller, wider, richer and healthier and to secure such human happiness as material things can promote. It is natural, therefore, that at least once every year, the workers in such branches of science should meet their colleagues from other parts of India and abroad, compare notes with them and evolve new truths after consultations and discussions.

As far as possible this University, as I have just indicated in my short review, lays equal stress "on the different manifestations of human spirit, on literature and philosophy, on art and religion as well as on science and technology". But when one witnesses the uses made of scientific discoveries for widespread destruction and human slaughter, when every day countries revel in perfecting deadlier and more effective weapons for assassinating thousands of innocent people and employ scientific weapons to indulge in an orgy of calculated savagery, the like of which has never been witnessed before, one begins to wonder with Rousseau "if science has corrupted our morals". Before we attempt to answer this problem, let us consider what we mean by the word "science" and what is implied by the term "morals".

Science has been defined as an ordered knowledge of natural phenomena and of their inter-relation. Such knowledge has accumulated through centuries by observation of facts, by a correct deduction from such observation and formulation of theories to explain them, by confirmatory experiments to test the theories ; any theory which would stand the trial of experiments would become part of scientific truth and knowledge. Such knowledge and such truth were originally used to supplement nature, to increase the comforts and security of men. Even among primitive men, such knowledge and observation led to a conception of primitive religion, to a conception that natural phenomena are due to direct and immediate intervention of "Unseen Beings". How then can such a conception of science and its processes corrupt our morals? Or have we fallen off from this original conception of our ancestors and have adopted lower standard of values?

The word "morals" is concerned with values, with solution of the ultimate problems of human conduct and what such conduct ought to be. The ultimate aim of "morals" is to secure the "highest good", to distinguish

between good and evil, to find out if the motives of human action and endeavour are being applied to attain this highest good, this *summum bonum*. If it be the object of science, as it originally was, "to increase the comforts and security of men", then science, as originally conceived and developed, cannot "corrupt our morals". If nature's gifts have been developed and perfected by man not for any higher purposes but to enable him to indulge in a blind orgy of destruction and devastation, the blame cannot be laid at the door of science or scientists. The sharp weapon, the knife of the surgeon, was forged not to destroy the life of the individual but that the scientist might use it to save the sufferer from the ravages of a malignant affection; the gunpowder was manufactured not to kill thousands of innocent lives but to blast a hillside to provide a channel of pure drinking water to the thirsty people on the other side of the hill and to provide thoroughfare for the masses: the investigations into the properties of phosphorus were directed not to incorporate it in the preparation of bombs to start conflagration in a market-place where the poor live but to provide suitable and ready materials for getting light. Thus it is, that man at the dictate of his animal passion is out to prostitute science and the truths available to science, and thus to suppress and strangle Truth. Science has taught that destruction and construction must go together. You cannot destroy unless you are ready to construct. Even so in our human body, destruction of tissue cells are going on every moment of our life to be replaced by new cells and new tissues; if not, a void would be left. If a mad man chooses to utilize scientific knowledge only to destroy and not to construct, he only suppresses the scientific truth and lowers the moral value of things. Einstein said in one place, "The present troubles of the world are due to science having advanced faster than morality; when morality catches up with science, these troubles would end." Sir Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan expressed a similar sentiment when he said that our aim should be to insist on the high mission of science and relate it organically to the central purpose of human life and society, to reconcile religious wisdom with scientific achievements.

Before the renowned scientists who have gathered here today, I would place the same proposition. Science is not confined to your laboratories, its truths are to be found in a wider field of human endeavour; social and

theological sciences require equal attenttion from the searchers after truth. For after all, is it not a fact that science, in spite of its apparent sub-divisions, is in truth one ; we may, for the convenience of study and research, separate agricultural science from geology and botany ; but can we look upon them as isolated and distinct one from the other? Should you not rather consider "the effects of science on the well-being of the community and the effects of social conditions on the advance of science"? If this proposition is accepted and acted upon, science and morality will develop together and we shall emerge into a new world order where Truth and Good will reign supreme.

2 January 1943

Indian Science Congress

Mr Prime Minister, Delegates and Friends:

I extend my cordial greetings to the distinguished scientists who have gathered here today, as they do every year, to exchange notes regarding the latest discoveries in the various fields of their search after truth. The Indian Science Congress Association meets annually with the main object of discussing how best the latest researches and investigations in science could be utilized for the promotion of human welfare in general and for the development of the country.

We are meeting at a time when we have successfully completed the First Five-Year Plan in India and have just started on the Second Plan. For the implementation of a plan of this magnitude we would need the services of many more scientists, many more engineers, many more physicists and many more technologists than are available at present in this country for its rapid development in various directions. The more we come to appreciate the latest developments in science and their application to human welfare, the more we begin to realize that, while material resources are no doubt a fundamental requirement for the successful development of a country, we depend no less upon its human resources. Moreover, it is not merely the technical knowledge that we must acquire to accomplish such tasks, it is equally essential that there must be developed ability to apply this knowledge to the organization and development of industries and to the production of means of human welfare. There is, moreover, the need for adaptation. We might get technical knowledge from other more advanced countries, but the scientists of India should be able to adapt this technical knowledge to the needs of the country, so that it may be effectively operative under different climatic and environmental

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Presidential address, Indian Science Congress, Forty fourth Session, Calcutta, 14 January 1957.

conditions and for utilization of indigenous raw materials. It is, therefore, not enough to borrow from other countries the results of their researches; we should be able to undertake original researches ourselves and adapt the results of such researches to the conditions obtaining in our own country. Such researches would be a continuous, and, no doubt, an arduous process too. Without it no progress can be achieved in this competitive world.

In this country we have been engaged in researches in scientific subjects for the past forty years or so, but we have not achieved much in engineering and technological researches, namely, researches in design, researches in development of machinery or its manufacture, erection and maintenance. For an underdeveloped country like India, it is not only essential that we should ourselves be able to manufacture machinery and build up factories, but we should also know how to do it with the materials that we possess. Engineering researches do not merely mean the application of physics to engineering problems, but they also include such new lines of advancement in engineering as biological and chemical engineering and public health engineering, which have definite social values, as they deal with problems which affect the common man. Development in these lines can be achieved only through patient and persistent researches. Other countries have done so and have gone ahead and we in this country should not delay in utilizing whatever resources we possess for the development of engineering in these directions. Steps taken towards this end may even mean our taking some amount of financial risks, but this is worth doing. Human mind ordinarily follows a particular groove and does not easily adapt itself to new ideas. Scientists would indeed be doing a great service to society if they would demonstrate to the common man the value of quickly adapting and utilizing the results of new researches.

A glance at the Second Five-Year Plan will reveal that quite a large number of development schemes have been included which would involve such huge cost that we may find it difficult to implement them unless our engineers and technicians are able to find effective and yet cheaper methods of executing these projects. Experience has shown that through scientific methods raw materials may be produced more cheaply and abundantly. Therefore, we have to secure the help of scientists to make available to us cheaper raw materials. In this country we possess a vast potential of man-

power, which we may be able to utilize and thus lower the total cost considerably. But that would mean that the designs of construction and the methods involved should be such that without much specialized skill the common man may be able easily to understand these, and take his full share in executing them. Take, for instance, the building of houses for the large number of our people who live in the city slums or in the rural areas. If the usual plan of the professional architect is followed, it would entail skilled processes and heavy expenditure so much so that the projects may become prohibitive. On the other hand, if the plans and designs for construction are simplified and locally available materials are utilized, even ordinary individuals may be able to give their helping hand in building their own houses and the total cost may be made considerably lower.

Sometimes I am inclined to envy the votaries of science who, like yourselves, devote their whole time, energy and intellect to discovering something new. It was not given to me to devote myself exclusively to the pursuit of science and to unravel the mysteries of life. When I was a young student of science, I had learnt that "matter is indestructible". Since then, as a medical practitioner, it has been my lot to face life under varied conditions, and I have also been a witness to hundreds of deaths. I have often wondered what gives life its versatility—what it is that makes one person so different from another. On the other hand, I have also wondered what the lifeless body signified. Matter, says the scientist, is indestructible, and yet, I ask, what happens to the dead body, which is composed of matter, after it is buried under the earth or consigned to the flames? What becomes of the matter composing the body? Obviously it changes its character. The elements of which a body is composed get diffused to the four corners of the earth and get mixed up with similar and other elements. The process indicates a transmutation of the basic elements of the human body. The conclusion is inevitable that the fundamental elements composing the human body change their characteristics or form but they are not destroyed. It is yet a mystery, to what extent an individual, when dying, releases forces which consciously or unconsciously go on affecting generations of human beings that follow him. From science I was drifting into the field of mysticism or perhaps spirituality.

History tells us that in the last 2,500 years, 902 wars have been fought, 1,615 internal dissensions have taken place, which have rent nations asunder. The most bellicose period of the world history has been the first half of the 20th century. We are now in the midst of a new era, call it the Atomic Age. Science has found a new and a vast source of energy which has put into man's hands great power, for good or for evil. Whether the hydrogen bomb will prove to be the doom of mankind, or a stabilizing force for permanent peace cannot yet be predicted. On the other hand, it is also true that materials developed from nuclear reactors can be wholly beneficent. They create a host of new substances, mainly radio-active, which are proving to be of the greatest value in connection with medicine, agriculture and industry and one day, perhaps very soon, we will have the nuclear reactors which will be used in atomic power plants that will make available new sources of energy by using fissionable materials as fuel. This fuel will not only be highly concentrated but will be easily transportable to countries where coal may be scarce or oil may not be available or even water-power may not have been developed.

Will peace prevail as civilization advances? At least history lends no support to this belief. Man has been getting more civilized and yet discovering more and more destructive weapons of killing. Violence is not known to have given a quietus to violence. No war has been able to end all wars. The last two world wars revealed another distressing feature: during hostilities the peaceful citizen was as much a victim of hostile action as a combatant at a military establishment. Wars have today assumed a totalitarian character. The development of guided missiles may mean destruction of whole cities, of districts, and of countries from sources thousands of miles away—and may destroy everything contained therein, the unarmed citizens' houses and farms, schools, hospitals and places of worship, the sources of food and water. Were the scientists and the technologists, who created the machinery of war, the witting or the unwitting instruments of military leaders, or were the scientists merely chips drifting along in the turbulent stream over which they had no control? We know that the one pursuit of the physicist and chemist is the discovery of the nature of matter and energy; the one purpose of the technologist is to apply that energy in changing the social environment; and, the one

purpose of the capitalist is to make profits through that energy. Thus both industry and war have provided the momentum which ever increases the output of energy. But can the scientists be held responsible for this perversion of physics and chemistry? It is not he who declares war ; nor it is he who leads the armies. Yet he has been as direct an aid to military states as if he had been commanded to make discoveries of military importance. This is because his problems are given to him by a society in arms or a militant state.

Scientists and engineers of the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries were aware of their relation to the military states. Leibnitz, Denis Papin, Otto Von Guericke and others dabbled in military mechanics. Leonardo offered his services to the Duke of Milan, primarily as a military engineer ; Galileo was a Professor of military science. Voyages to the undiscovered India, America and Africa created a demand to determine the position of the ship in an unchartered sea. The classic studies of magnetism made by William Gilbert, in the 17th century, followed the observation of mariners on the vagaries of the compass-needle. Roger Bacon and Berthhold Schwartz, mere monks, are credited with the discovery of a simple mixture, which was gunpowder. All explosives from gunpowder to trinitrotoluene were developed by civilians.

And, yet, it is science which has been the cementing agency between peoples of different races, religions, traditions and customs. When a whole population uses a common railway system, and telegraph and telephone links, or listens to music and speeches radiating from a common broadcasting station, or thrills at the same cinematographic film projected at a thousand theatres simultaneously, or rides to and from work in common carriers like omnibuses and tramcars, or wears standardized garments and shoes, there results a sense of unity. Then science becomes an agency that draws millions of people into one common fabric of human society or social order.

We are here presented with a paradox. Science and technology are essentially international in spirit. By training, these principles can be inculcated anywhere. But the industrial fruits of science and technology are governed by economic or military factors. While scientific progress sometimes takes place because of the constant internal urge of the physicist,

chemist and technologist to seek newer objects of research, the greatest stimulation to such progress has been dictated by the economic needs of a country or the exigencies of war. This mobilization of science and technology has made it impossible for the small and technologically backward nations to wage mechanized wars without external assistance. The dread of finding itself cut off from food supplies and industrial materials develops an instinct of self-preservation in a country. It strives to have a type of nationalism which wants to secure raw materials for the country's safety and production. Thus one country's desire spells another country's danger. A country cannot but retain what it has gained and struggle for more. The type of nationalism which develops in the country is economic or political in spirit and the citizen becomes the member of an industrial and military State.

During the last twenty years, scientists have slowly awakened to this abuse of their talents and discoveries. They have seen as much misery flow out of the misapplication of their work as out of war. They now crave for the opportunity to improve the quality of the human stock through the wider support and application of eugenics: They dream of producing synthetic substitutes for meat, milk and eggs; they hold out the promise of a world in which poverty and misery will be unknown. They maintain that in the past science had been compelled to pursue an irrational course, which had little relation to the realities of life.

Today, through science, wherever physical expansion of an area is not possible, new means of crop production and new industrial methods are discovered, which go to create the wealth necessary to raise the standard of living and banish the spectre of unemployment. These are brought about through painstaking researches. The stuff of which the universe is composed is being torn apart, molecule by molecule, atom by atom, and out of the atomic fragments new kinds of matter are being created and new energy is being released.

To nine persons out of ten, the chemist is still something of a magician, a mysterious figure, impelled to mix together strange and sometimes dangerous substances, only to discover that he has at his command an explosive that will blast mountains or a plastic that can be a substitute for any known material of common use. It is so with the technological

chemist, the metallurgical chemist, the nutritional chemist, the chemist who manufactures synthetic foods and artificial dress materials like rayons and nylons and plastics. Today we are in the midst of a chemical revolution.

Synthetic chemistry cannot ignore the progress made in "chemotherapy", to which I wish to make a reference in detail. Paul Ehrlich, who coined this term, limited it to the chemical treatment of bacterial diseases; but today pharmacologists are inclined to describe chemotherapy as that branch of science which deals with chemical effects of drugs on living organisms. They include among the chemotherapeutic agents hormones, vitamins, pain-killers, sleep-producers and a host of such substances. Even quinine from Peruvian bark and extracts from toads and cobra venom, which affect the nerves and stimulate the heart, belong to the same category. The story of scientific chemotherapy, a subject which is of great interest to me, starts with Ehrlich's classical study of syphilis. Ehrlich discovered that certain dyes, derived from napthalene, would only stain the germs inside the tissues which themselves remained unstained. This gave Ehrlich the cue to the discovery of a germicide which would attack the microbes and yet leave the animal tissues unaffected. He knew that many tropical diseases like kala-azar, sleeping sickness, dysentery, etc. were caused by protozoa. Sleeping sickness, endemic in Africa, was caused by a protozoa called trypanosome. After patient and laborious research, Ehrlich found a harmless chemical which would seek out a germ in the tissues. To this chemical was to be attached a killer which would destroy the bacteria. Arsenic was found to be such a killer. By repeated experiments he succeeded in combining arsenic with a selective organic compound. When Schaudin discovered that syphilis was caused by a protozoa called spirochete, he also discovered that spirochete and trypanosome were similar in nature. With this knowledge in his possession Ehrlich found an organic compound, 914 Neoarsphenamine, which could be injected to cure syphilis which had till then been a menace to society.

The medical world was electrified by Ehrlich's success. If syphilis could be treated by chemotherapy, why not a lot of other infectious diseases caused by cocci and by bacilli? Streptococci, staphylococci, gonococci, menigococci and pneumococci, which cause widespread infections and

devastation among human beings could be treated in a similar manner. Chemists working in Farben Industry experimented with "Azo" dyes and found them useful for blood infections by streptococci. They called this drug Prontosil.

While these new discoveries regarding chemotherapeutic drugs were being made, Dr Dabos of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research extracted a powerful germicide from the soil which healed the wounds of empyma, carbuncle, boils and ulcers. He wondered how the soil which itself is full of deadly germs manages to produce plants in abundance, how the disease germs which kill a man are themselves killed when he is buried. Evidently the soil is self-cleaning. This finding was interesting and Dabos found a chemical, tyrothricin, in the soil which killed the germs. An accident, however, led to the discovery of a chemotherapeutic agent more powerful than tyrothricin. The discoverer was Sir Alexander Flemming and what he discovered was Penicillin. Flemming was growing some staphylococci in Petri dishes and he noticed that in some places the cocci were not growing. Spots of green mould had appeared in these places. In September 1928, Flemming made cultures of the green mould, which he found to be a variety of Penicillium and he called the pure culture Penicillin—an ideal chemotherapeutic agent. Such moulds generally grow on cheese, on trees and on the soil, which we in our ignorance have regarded as useless, if not dangerous. Some more research work had to be done before Penicillin could be made available for therapeutics. In 1939, Dr Florey discovered that in body secretions, i.e., tear, saliva and in egg-white there was an enzyme (Lysozyme) which dissolved bacteria. (No wonder animals lick their wounds.) He studied Penicillin from various aspects and produced it in sufficient quantities in a purified form for clinical use. There are now 100,000 type moulds which can yield antibiotics.

Thus, with the arsenical compounds used in treating syphilis, with the sulfa drugs, with tyrothricin, and lastly with Penicillin and allied antibiotics we have an array of chemotherapeutic drugs available to save mankind from the ravages of microbes. Such researches only prove that the human body is a delicately balanced chemical apparatus. Destroy that balance and we fall sick. To cure a disease chemical balance must be restored. Poison must fight poison. One such poison in the human

body is insulin, which controls the utilization of sugar in the body, another is adrenalin which is a valuable drug in haemorrhagic conditions. The vitamins and hormones, about which we hear so much, also act as chemotherapeutic agents, and they direct metabolism in the human body. We often wonder why we get old. It is because the body's chemistry has changed. Turn where we will within us and we discover chemicals at work. Therefore, the development of chemotherapy is part of the chemical revolution that is changing life and industry.

Ever since the days of Charles Darwin physiologists and anatomists have had their doubts as to how long primitive savage man will survive the nervous strain of machine world where he lives an artificial life in artificial environment. At a recent Congress of the American College of Surgeons, Dr Buerki, President of the American Hospital Association, presented a picture of a modern man, a victim of high blood pressure, enlarged heart, failing circulation, jangled nerves, result of doing several things at the same time. At Yale, the Nobel Prize-winner Sir Joseph Bancroft showed how delicate is the balance between mind and body, and how quickly the mind succumbs when the conditions under which the body naturally thrives are only slightly changed. In 1936, at the meeting of the British Association for Advancement of Science, Professor Hawkins, the distinguished palaeontologist, said that man was the "only irrational creature".

The glory and the curse of man is his brain. While it raises him above the beasts, it dooms him as a species, for the brain is getting over-developed and over-specialized. It endows him with a mind that conceives new machines to take the place of muscles, new instruments to supplement inadequate senses, new and complex ways of living in communities. The poor body cannot adapt itself rapidly enough to the social and technological changes conceived by the mind. Heart and muscle belong to the jungle, the modern mind of man has an environment of its own creation. The verdict appears to be that man must crack under this strain.

It is the simple organism that endures. The one-celled organism—amoeba—endures best of all. The lowly things are harmonious wholes; introduce complexity and specialization, the old harmony is impaired. Man is developed from simpler species, the lower animals. Each upward step

has been possible because of an important physical change—a better co-ordination of mind and body. It is true that in the course of development, sometimes one organ shoots ahead, sometimes another. The central nervous system has outstripped all others.

Sir Arthur Keith said: "Civilization is submitting the human body to a vast and critical experiment. It has laid bare some of the weak points in the human body but the conditions which have provoked them are not of Nature's ordaining but of man's choosing." In 1936, Hawkins, speaking before the British Association for the Advancement of Science, said: "The high cerebral specialization that makes possible all these developments and the extraordinary rate at which success has been attained, point to the conclusion that this is a species destined to a spectacular fall more complete and rapid than the world has ever seen."

Let us take the physiologist's account of blood in human body and see what happens to the mind when the physical and chemical balance of blood is disturbed:

1. Overheat your blood and you rave. And yet men have to work nearly at the raving point in coal mines and boiler rooms, at the mouth of blazing furnaces to produce the things which society demands for its artificial environment.

2. Chill blood: Bancroft, the famous physiologist, lay naked in an icy room. He described his sensation afterwards. "After a time", he later described, "mind gave up the struggle." He was content to lie still and die. He would have died had not his vigilant assistant saved him. His mind ceased to watch over him.

3. Take away oxygen from blood. The mind loses its reasoning ability. The breathlessness at high altitudes is due to the nerves supplying the respiratory muscles failing to do their duty because of the want of oxygen.

4. Decrease calcium in blood by half—convulsion, coma and then death follows. Double the calcium: the blood thickens so that it can hardly flow. Heaviness, indifference, unconsciousness mark the stages of mind's dethronement; death is the end.

5. Reduce the amount of sugar in blood. There is a feeling of 'goneness', a blotting out of the mind, then death. Increase the sugar a

little, fear seizes the mind: illusions and diplopia (double vision) ensue, speech becomes thick.

6. Blood is alkaline: acidify it slightly—coma follows—mind becomes blank. Alkalify the blood, convulsion ensues.

7. Take water from blood: we collapse. Add water: we suffer from headache, nausea and dizziness.

Therefore, change anything in the composition of blood and the mind gives way.

Civilization changes the environments and thereby the physical and chemical conditions of the blood. Any changes in the environments—such changes as modern civilization dictates—may be too much for the body and hence for the mind. We want to annihilate distance and time with rockets and radio: we want to convert night into day with lamps that are miniature suns: we want to clothe ourselves in fabrics woven from fibres that nature did not provide. All these are incompatible with the survival of man as a species. In us a mind that yearns is at work, but the reward of successful yearning would be extinction. And yet human mind must go on experimenting in developing a quality of mind which curbs the tiger and the ape in him even at the risk of extinction.

Every man has his own worries: some have persecution complexes, suicidal mania, obsessions, indecisiveness, nervous tensions. They become problems to their families, nuisances to themselves, they become ineffective and unemployable in society. What has happened to them? In appearance and structure they are indistinguishable from a solid citizen, observe all social conventions, even live an irreproachable life. And yet the affected persons cannot think logically. Why? In order to explain these phenomena, different parts of brains of animals were either removed or stimulated with electric current. It was discovered that there are centres in the brain which control movements, seeing, hearing, swallowing, winking, breathing, sweating and other activities. Effects of injuries to the human brain were also closely studied.

In 1935, a Portuguese surgeon, Egas Moniz, first suggested that it was possible through psychosurgery to operate the brain, to stop worries, phobias and delusions. He had noted how stereotyped were the symptoms of the mentally disturbed patients. There were the same curses and

lamentations, the same fury, the same wild looks, the same fits of weeping, the same lack of self-restraint under similar situations, even the same words and phrases were used to express their delusions and fears. It was clear to him that such a fixed pattern of conduct presupposed equally fixed pattern of brain cells that control passions, desires and fears. If the brain cell patterns could be changed, he thought, the pattern of conduct could also be changed. How is the brain cell pattern fixed? By repetitive use. Any idea may become an obsession if it is entertained long enough. But we usually shake them off. Suppose, however, the mind is fatigued, the emotions are given no outward expression but are turned inward, and fear takes possession of the mind—the fear of losing a job, the fear of contracting an incurable disease, the fear of being the victim of a plot engineered by individuals. These fears are not so easily shed by a fatigued mind. Nerve messages flashing over the same pathways again and again involving the same group of cells become fixed as 'brain cell' patterns. To effect a cure, new pathways must be formed, new cells must learn how to form new groupings of cell patterns. Egas Moniz proved that fixed ideas could be dissipated by breaking up the link of the groupings of nerve cells through fixed pathways.

Scientists came to learn that the brain of a human being is not one piece, say, like the heart. The brain of an animal has through successive upgrading become the human brain. Nature modified the brain of this animal, enlarged the brain of that, contracted the brain of the third, developed a sense of hearing here and a sense of sight there. Nothing was thrown away. The record of the evolution of brain from the worm through the first toad, bird, dog, horse, ape is packed in the human skull. The work of Egas Moniz in Portugal and of Freeman and Watts in USA further showed that there is a complete association and interaction between two major parts of the brain in the human being. One is the thalamus and the other is the cerebrum which completely overlies the thalamus. The thalamus is one old component of the animal brain. Every animal from worm upwards has it. It is the seat of raw emotions, desires, passions, hatred, fear, combativeness, love, appetite This thalamus is incapable of thinking or imagining. Yet no nervous impulse set up by what we see, hear, feel, touch, taste or smell in the outer world could reach or leave

the cortex of the brain without passing through thalamus. Though thalamus cannot think it can colour thinking.

If we had only thalamus, we would fly into rage at the slightest irritation, burn up with hate, curl up with fear, woo with ferocity. Why is a bird always happy flying, twittering, fighting, courting, feeding, preening? Because its brain is largely thalamus and this thalamus is subject to little control. It is the enormous roof brain, the cerebrum and its cortex, which makes man what he is—the inventor, the philosopher, the moralist, the scientist, the planner. Yet with a roof brain alone human existence would probably be impossible. We would be unemotional. We would think without feeling. Never a tear would be shed over the death of a dear friend, never would we sigh in love, never a word of hate would escape us.

Man must balance emotion and reason. The preservation of this balance is a matter of nicely adjusting thalamic feeling with cerebral logic. One wants to drink because of the urge of the thalamic cells, but the prefrontal lobes warn that this would be harmful. The desire to kill on an impulse is thalamic, the fear of the law is cerebral. When we yearn, fight, love and strive earnestly to satisfy the emotional needs, the thalamus is on the ascendency; only the prompt assertion of authority by the prefrontal lobes restores the poise and keeps us out of jail. Our brains are the battle-ground on which the old thalamus and the new prefrontal lobes strive for mastery. Cable of nerves, association fibres connect the prefrontal lobe with thalamus. Impulses flow back and forth over the cables. In mental disorders, thalamus overpowers the prefrontal lobes, and anger, fear, worry, hate, triumph completely over common sense. The brain and nervous system are marvellously adjustable.

I have tried to place before you a short account of some of the research works undertaken by the scientists in the field of chemotherapy. As a person interested in administration, I have to appeal to the scientists to contribute their share towards the development of the human society, where man may live in peace and in harmony with nature and with other human beings.

Our country is rich in natural resources and minerals as well as in human resources. But we have had yet no detailed statistics or data as

to the way in which we can develop these resources for the benefit of the country and her people. It is admitted that we need heavy industries, we need machine industries and we need consumer goods industries. For all these we need trained technicians. The Planning Commission has estimated that in the Second Five-Year Plan we will need thousands of graduates and diploma-holders in civil engineering, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and chemical engineering. These men should not only possess the requisite technical knowledge, but should also be capable of utilizing the resources that we possess. The should be able to put into use our indigenous raw materials for the great task that lies before us. In Japan I noticed that not only have they adopted the machines imported from abroad for their use, but they have simplified the technical processes in such a way that elaborate training in the use of such machinery is not necessary. While they have utilized highly technical personnel for some industries, in most other industries the ordinary mechanical instruments and gadgets have been discarded and replaced by methods which require manual skill so as to take advantage of their abundant man-power.

There are other directions in which the researches of the scientists may be very fruitful. Apart from securing increased food production or increased quantity of cash crops, which would develop our nutrition and improve our economy, it is important that we should train the agriculturists in improved agricultural techniques. The nature of the soil in an area, the manner in which it is affected by various types of manures and fertilizers, the methods of preserving seeds in a proper manner, are problems in which research would now be invaluable. As a result of research, traditional methods may have to be discarded and new methods adopted. At the same time there may be something to be learnt from indigenous and traditional practices. It has been my conviction and experience that if there be a disease prevalent in a particular area, the remedy has also been provided by nature in that area, if we have the patience to take the trouble to find it out. On one occasion I went to see a blackwater fever case in a part of Assam, where this disease is endemic and scores of people died of it. The treatment of such cases was then a despair to all physicians. On reaching the place I found that the local people used the leaves of a tree which grows locally for curing this type of fever. I got some of these leaves

for experimental purposes. The scientists have succeeded in obtaining injectables from the extracts of the leaves and for the last 20 years I have not lost a single case of a blackwater fever by using this drug. I could give many instances of this character. Every problem has a solution to be found very near itself.

One sees in life many complex paradoxes. As man goes forward new problems arise. As work goes on new patterns of life emerge. This adventure of life continues. There is no finality about anything. Our ideal today may be a hundred years away from now; the ideal then will again be a hundred years thence. As we proceed, the target appears to recede and bigger and better targets are formed. The clouds of time may have hidden for us innumerable problems, trials and dangers, yet time may also reveal solutions of unknown difficulties or delightful surprises, which man with his knowledge of science should be prepared to turn to his advantage with faith, hope and goodwill.

14 January 1957

IN THE BATTLE OF FREEDOM

'NON-CO-OPERATION FROM WITHIN'

In the first election of 1920, the Congress had boycotted the Reformed legislatures, in pursuance of the Non-Co-operation programme adopted by the Calcutta and Nagpur sessions of the Congress. Then came the setback, in 1922, of the Non-Co-operation movement, and this convinced Deshabandhu Chittaranjan that a change in the direction of freedom movement was called for. He advocated that the Congressmen enter the Reformed legislatures and follow "a policy of uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction with a view to making government through the Assembly and the Councils impossible", and he finally pursuaded the Congress to permit him to work the programme of "Non-Co-operation with the Government from within the Councils".

Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, then a comparatively unknown figure in politics, contested the 1923 election as an Independent candidate, but with the blessings and support of Deshabandhu and the Swarajya Party. He had a remarkable victory over the Grand Old Man of Bengal, Surendranath Banerjea, once the "tribune of the people", but now, alas, regarded as a limb of an alien bureaucracy.

In the Bengal Legislative Council, Dr Roy proved to be one of Deshabandhu's most doughty lieutenants. Eventually, he joined the Swarajya Party, with which he had all along been voting, and, after the passing away of Deshabandhu, became its Deputy Leader, with Deshapriya J. M. Sengupta as the Leader.

It was on Dr Roy's motion that Deshabandhu's spectacular triumph, in 1924 and 1925, in overthrowing the ministry was repeated in 1927, when the great leader was no more to lead the party. He also resisted assiduously the Government's attempt at starving Calcutta University and depriving it of its autonomy.

A selection from Dr Roy's speeches in the Bengal Legislative Council in 1924-28 is printed here as a record of his tireless crusade against a Government which was impervious to the demands of the people.

No Confidence in the Ministry

SIR, I have your leave to move the following two motions that stand against my name. With your permission I will deal with both the motions together, although, I suppose, you will put them to the vote separately.

I beg to move that this Council has no confidence in the Hon'ble Hadji Mr A. K. Abu Ahmed Khan Ghuznavi, Minister for Agriculture and Industries.

I beg further to move that this Council has no confidence in the Hon'ble Mr Byomkes Chakravarti, Minister for Education.

You, Sir, have ruled that my motion of no-confidence in Ministers is inadmissible, although you have been pleased to accept my other two motions which asked for the expression of opinion of the Council on the two gentlemen separately. To us, members of the Congress, this is a distinction without a difference. To us diarchy was, has been and is "inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing". Therefore, no person, whatever his qualifications, and irrespective of his caste or creed or colour, is entitled to our confidence, if he helps the carrying on of diarchy under the present condition, although individual qualifications for the ministership have to be remembered and considered. This decision of yours, therefore, does not affect the main issue involved. The position of the Congress is clear whether we take the motion against the two persons separately or jointly. I shall, therefore, deal with this motion from a general point of view and then go on to consider, specifically, the points regarding each motion.

It was in the year 1919 that the Indian National Congress passed a resolution moved by the late Mr C. R. Das, which ran thus: "That this Congress adheres to the resolution passed at the Delhi Congress regarding constitutional reforms and is of opinion that the Reforms Act is inadequate, unsatisfactory and disappointing." The fourth paragraph of the resolution

runs thus: "That this Congress trusts, so far as may be possible, they will work the reforms so as to secure an early establishment of full responsible Government." In explaining this resolution Mr Das said: "We would work the reforms so far as it may be, for the early establishment of responsible Government. We are not opposed to co-operation if co-operation helps us to attain Swaraj. We are not opposed to obstruction—plain downright obstruction—when that helps to attain our ideal." That was in 1919. It may be suggested that at that period sufficient knowledge had not accumulated to justify the expression of such adverse opinion regarding the reforms. Six years after, in May 1925, Mr Das said in his Faridpur speech[1]: "If I was satisfied that the present Act has transferred any real responsibility to the people, that there is an opportunity of self-realization, self-development and self-fulfilment in the Act, I would unhesitatingly co-operate with the Government and begin constructive work in the Council Chamber. The basis in the present Act is distrust on the Ministers and there can be no talk of co-operation in an atmosphere of distrust on the Ministers." "To make such co-operation real and effective," he said, "two things are necessary: First, there should be a real change of heart in the rulers which would be indicated by the Government through divesting itself of its wide discretionary powers, and then by proclaiming a general amnesty to all political prisoners; and secondly, the Government should guarantee to us the fullest recognition of our rights to the establishment of Swaraj to come automatically in the near future."

The attitude of the party has not varied since. It is a most malicious mis-statement to say that the Congress has in its general principles and outlook changed its attitude towards reforms, although in actual detail we might have had to vary our methods according to circumstances.

It is desirable at this stage to consider what opportunities are granted to us, under the Reforms Act of 1919, for "self-fulfilment, self-realization and self-development". Section 52 of the Act says, "The Governor of a Governor's province may by notification appoint Ministers to administer the transferred subjects and any Minister so appointed shall hold office during his pleasure"; and sub-section 23 of the same section says, "In relation to transferred subjects the Governor shall be guided by the advice

[1] Presidential Address at the Faridpur Session of the Bengal Provincial Conference.

of the Ministers unless he sees sufficient cause to dissent from their opinion, in which case he may require action to be taken otherwise than in accordance to that advice." The provision of the Act makes it perfectly clear that the appointment and dismissal of a Minister is in the hands of the Governor and during the period that the Ministers hold office it is the Governor who in his actions, in relation to transferred subjects, is to be guided by the advice of the Ministers, unless he chooses to act otherwise.

A Governor in India, as every one of us knows, is a representative of His Majesty, and as such he calls upon a person to act as a Minister "during his pleasure", but he also is the head of an irreplaceable executive, and as such can interfere, if he so chooses, in the administration of the transferred departments. The provisions of the Act, to my mind, give to the Governor the whole responsibility for the administration of the transferred departments and the Imperial Parliament holds him accountable for the proper management of these departments. He is expected to choose his own Ministers and can dismiss them and control them. From this point of view, may I ask the erstwhile President of the Bengal Responsivist Party, now in liquidation, wherein does he find in this Act that initiative, power and responsibility, those preliminary essentials which, they declared, are to be ensured before acceptance of office?

But it has been urged that no constitution of this character can be judged merely by the language of these sections of the Act ; they have to be judged by the applicability in practice. Have these sections conferred any real responsibility on the people? In the report of the Joint Select Committee on the Act of 1919 we find in paragraph 4 the following sentence: "The pronouncement of the 20th August, 1917 spoke of a substantial step in the direction of the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible Government and not of the partial introduction of responsible Government." This report makes it abundantly clear that the Act itself, whatever hopes the pronouncement of 1917 might have roused in our minds, is never intended to confer any responsibility on the people of this country.

During the last five years, in different provinces of India, Ministers

have worked not in a spirit of opposition or obstruction but with a full desire to co-operate, whether responded to or not by an irresponsible Government, and to work this system for the good of the country. Let these Ministers give evidence before you today, as they did before the Muddiman Committee[1], to tell you how the provisions of the Act have worked in practice. Sir K. V. Reddy, Minister, Madras, says that "in practice they have found that responsible Government and democracy have become unreal; at present a Governor can interfere at almost every turn of the wheel of Government machineries." Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, an ex-Member of the Executive Council of Bombay, said that "the Governor claimed that the Ministers' function in law was merely to give him advice but that it was open to him not to accept it for any sufficient cause." The result was that the Ministers were never sure of their ground and the Governor claimed more powers in the administration of the transferred departments than he had in the reserved, where the Governor is bound, under ordinary circumstances, by the decision of the Council as a whole and cannot ordinarily override such decision. Lala Harkissen Lall of Punjab said, "Governor's being solely responsible for services creates a somewhat undignified position for the Members and Ministers." Sir K. V. Reddy of Madras said that "in practice he found the servants to be the masters". Mr Kelkar of Central Provinces said that "the provisions of section 52 of the Act have been considerably whittled down by means of rules and orders issued by the Governor under section 49 (2) of the said Act". Sir Chitnavis of Central Provinces, in reply to a question by Mr Jinnah,—"What is the position of a Minister? Is he the Governor's colleague?"—answered, "The settlement of policy in the transferred subjects does not really rest on the Ministers, the ultimate authority rests on the Governor." Lala Harkissen Lall said that the work he did as a Minister was not for the good of the country.

I have quoted enough of extracts to show that the cramping effect of the Act itself has not been improved during use but, if anything, has become more cramped. The Congress party have always held that under these circumstances effective ministry is impossible. Popular Government

[1] A Committee appointed by the Government in August 1924 to examine the defects of the Montagu Constitution. It was presided over by Sir Alexander Muddiman, Home Member.

has not been conferred on the people of this country. The real fact is that no subject has been transferred, although certain departments have been. The Ministers have no effective 'control' over the superior officers of their departments, nor have they any 'voice' in their selection.

This being the position, we, the members of the Congress party, hold that we cannot have any confidence in the Ministers who are prepared to accept office under these conditions. We have no confidence in them if we find that they have not the backing of a majority of the elected members of the Council; we have no confidence in them if we find that their conduct of affairs in the management of public concern has not shown any great concern for the welfare of those for whom they were responsible; we have no confidence in them if we find that their only chance of keeping their office is based not on the amount of work they have done for their country and the people, but on the vague promises of help and support to members of their Council or their families. We have no confidence in the Ministers when we find that they have to depend on the official votes to save themselves from disaster. We have no confidence in the Ministers, for they are not prepared by themselves to secure for the subjects of this vast country even the elementary rights which every citizen in any civilized Government possesses. When a motion before this Council was moved by Babu Bejoy Kumar Chatterji, on the 22nd February, 1927, for the immediate release of all prisoners placed under restraint under Regulation III of 1818 and the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act, where were the Ministers? On which side did they vote? Did they not, by remaining silent on that occasion, give a tacit consent to the forging of the fetters which are keeping hundreds of young men behind the prison bars today? Did they speak on that occasion? Did they raise their voice of protest against it? What did they do when they found Hindus and Muhammadans, moderates and extremists, Swarajists and non-Swarajists filing into the opposition lobby on the question[1]? We know that they kept to their places perhaps as a special concession granted by His Excellency. Did they not vote for granting a large sum of money for the Band establishment and Bodyguard establishments of the Governor? Did they think that their prestige would be affected if they did not attempt

[1] The motion, it may be noted here, was carried, 71 voting for and 26 against it.

to maintain the prestige of the Governor? When the demand for the Secret Service money was made, did they vote on the popular side?

Why should this be so? Why must it be that the Ministers, our popular Ministers, the people's men, the leaders of the elected representatives of the Council, should be bound down to the chariot wheels of a benign Government? Mr Chakravarti, who, as leader of the now defunct Nationalist party in the Council, had led his party into the no-lobby and refused the formation of a ministry on three occasions,[1] until certain essential conditions were complied with, has now accepted office without those conditions. And what is the result? While he and his party in 1925 refused to accept the principle that the local Government should contribute towards the cost of construction of roadways on the Bally Bridge, he has to vote today for a grant of Rs. 36,25,000 of people's money, his people's money, towards the same projects. What a humiliation for him! What was there to prevent him from voting on the popular side? He could not do this only because he was the creature of the Government, a limb of the bureaucracy, because he could not command any majority among the elected members of the Council, because he does not represent the people at all except that he managed to be a popular Minister by getting into the Council through the backdoor of a close and special constituency.

The Hon'ble Mr B. Chakravarti, Sir, is obviously an honourable man. He gave a glowing account of his programme in March last.[2] He trusted that Ministers with their joint efforts would be able to alleviate, if not eliminate, the communal tension which is eating into the vitals of our society. Will he, as an honourable man, tell what steps, if any, has been taken towards the progressive realization of that ideal? Has the daily paper, *The Bengalee,* which obtains his subsidy, poured oil over troubled waters or has it continued to prove "bar and anathema" on this vexed tension? May I ask him what special facility he has provided or attempted to provide for an expansion of Moslem education, for the starting of two institutions for Moslem girls which he had put in the forefront of his programme? Has he endeavoured to provide for adequate Moslem repre-

[1] In 1924 and 1925, when, under the leadership of Deshabandhu, the demand for Ministers' salaries was thrown out by the Council.

[2] This has reference to Byomkesh Chakravarti's speech on 12 March 1927, when motions seeking to refuse to provide for salary of Ministers were before the House.

sentation in the Senate during his period of office? Would it be news to him that during the last three months two vacancies occurred in the Senate owing to the expiry of terms of office of two Senators? Sir Abdur Rahim's term expired on the 16th of June, 1927. This fellowship still remains unfilled whereas Dr Bhandarkar whose term expired so late as the 10th of August last has already been renominated. May I ask if this is fulfilling the pledges he gave on the 12th of March?

Sir, before I finish with this aspect of the question I must state before the Council the motive behind this resolution, because we can judge human actions only by the motives underlying them. We have always regarded these institutions of ministry with their grants of responsibility and power as mere shams. We have always considered these Ministers to be props of an alien bureaucracy, on which the beautiful superstructure of irresponsible power is built. We are committed to non-acceptance in accordance with the pledges of the Congress party. Therefore, in making this motion I and my party have no other interest. I can, however, assure His Excellency and every member present here and the public outside that we have tabled this motion after full consideration and mature judgement. We have done so not in a "spirit of levity", "not as a pastime", as the Hon'ble Mr Ghuznavi would have the public believe. We have done this with a full sense of responsibility for our action. However much we may be maligned, whatever attempts may be made to taboo everything that emanates from the other side of the House, we would never have taken this responsibility unless we felt that we are voicing the feelings of the public in this matter.

Sir, the case of the Hon'ble Mr Ghuznavi is slightly different. He represents a general constituency and, therefore, is a champion of the people. How has he discharged his responsibilities? When the motion of Babu Bejoy Kumar Chatterji for the release of political prisoners came up before the Council in March last, what did he do?

He with his honourable colleague shared the joint responsibility of sitting on the fence and remained neutral. May I ask him, where does he find in the Act any direction that the Ministers should not lead the people's representatives into the lobby wherein is cast the vote of the people? I ask him, Has he not by this very act forfeited the confidence of the people

and therefore of their representatives? If he thought that the indefinite detention of the youths, the flower of Bengal, was right, if he felt that the curtailment of personal liberty of political workers was a correct procedure, why did he not go into the Government lobby? On the other hand, if he felt otherwise, if he felt doubtful of the wisdom of such action, why did he not have the boldness and courage to say, "I stand by the liberties of my people—'freedom first, freedom second, freedom always' is my motto"? If that meant his resignation, he should have shouldered with pride the honour and glory of a martyr to the cause of the freedom of his motherland. It was only then that he could have asked for the blessing of Providence and the good wishes of the people of this country.

Sir, Mr Ghuznavi is a great champion of communal interests. He is one of those altruistic persons who consider that to serve themselves is to serve their community. He it was who first raised the problem of music before mosques, which has brought on untold sufferings upon the poor people of this province and has tarnished its good name. During the past few months, a most harrowing tale of suffering and frightful incidence of massacre has come from Ponabalia. His co-religionists in this Council raised this question: should he not have insisted on a proper committee of enquiry and, if unsuccessful, should he not, as a champion of Muhammadan interests, come out of a Government which refused this modest demand?

Sir, the Hon'ble Minister delivered a speech recently at Berhampore and he took care to publish this speech, following the unwritten convention in all civilized countries and also took care that a copy of *The Statesman* containing a report of the above speech reached my hand. In that speech he has given us a catalogue of his achievements: medical education and need of up-to-date hospitals are now being carefully tackled; his next achievement, the problem of rural water-supply, has not escaped his attention. I would declare it for all those who may care to know that if any credit for the increase in medical schools is to be given to any individual the Maharaja Bahadur of Nadia[1] should be given his full share of encomium. But I am sure he will not object to sharing with Mr Ghuznavi a part of his glory. His next achievement was the scheme which was the dream of

[1] Maharaja Kshaunish Chandra Ray, a member of the Executive Council, Government of Bengal.

Deshabandhu. It is the privilege of the Minister to give full impetus to that scheme. We all know the history of this scheme.[1] If Sir James Donald's stony heart had not melted, the Hon'ble Minister would have been no nearer the scheme than he was in 1924. We know how this scheme was launched ; we know also how the scheme was taken up to the point which it has now reached. There are five other items in the record. I need not worry the members of the Council nor do I intend to take their time by repeating them. He is careful not to tell us whether it is the unwritten practice of Ministers in all civilized countries to canvass for votes with promises of preferment. I am told that during his recent tour to one place, I believe at Khulna, he refused nominations of certain individuals who were recommended by the Magistrate. He only put in the names of those who had gone to pay him honour and respect. Is it the unwritten practice of Ministers in all civilized countries to sit tight on official files in order to serve their own personal interests, to request subordinates to bring pressure to bear on the doubtful and the hesitating voters? He is careful not to tell us why his six months of office in 1924 were so barren of achievement. What has made the present record so refreshing as he says? He does not tell us whether there is any constitutional and popular Minister in any civilized country in the world who would stick to his office when 21 out of 38 elected members of his own community, of which he is the high priest and champion in this House, voted against his salary on the 12th March, 1927.[2] These members did not come, as we have, pledged to non-acceptance of office ; they did not come to oppose the working of the reforms and yet, 21 out of 38 such members, who had come to the Council on the same ticket as he had, voted against his salary.

In the circumstances, was it not his duty to offer his resignation to His Excellency the Governor? But no, he is not ashamed to continue in office even when the majority of the elected Indian members of the Council has voted against his salary.

With these words I beg to move the two motions that stand in my name.[3]

25 August 1927

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[1] See Appendix.
[2] This refers to Jitendralal Bannerjee's unsuccessful motion seeking to refuse the demand for salary of Ministers.
[3] Both the motions were carried.

Budget of the Government of Bengal

For 1924-25

The annual ceremony of presenting the budget has to a certain extent been gone through. We have been carefully listening to the speeches around the table, discussing the provisions of the budget. But with what object? If we look at the regulations under which we are acting today, we find that we are precluded from initiating any grant or augmenting it or transferring the provision of a grant from one head to another, following, I believe, the precedent that obtains in the Imperial Parliament, where the Crown, on the advice of his Ministers who happen to be the executive and are therefore responsible for the revenue, demand the money and the Commons grant it. As a general rule these demands are granted without any reduction, because there the executive happen to be responsible in various ways to the legislature as well as to the country. What is the remedy in our case? How can this House control the Executive? Was it, I wonder, the intention of the Government of India Act to show that the only possible and practical means by which the legislature here can have any influence over the executive is either to refuse a grant or to reduce it, whenever the legislature wishes to make its voice felt? It is a truism, Sir, that if a man is given power, he is sure to abuse it—if he does not do so, he is not a man, he is perhaps a superman—unless there is a strong public opinion to check him, and that is very well illustrated in the proceedings of the budget that has been presented to us. A part of the revenue for the ensuing year is derived from the taxes that were imposed in the year 1922. The Hon'ble Mr Kerr, as he then was, while introducing the Taxation Bill, promised that, if the Government could secure a moderate surplus after providing for the bed-rock anticipated deficit of 90 lakhs for 1922-23, it would be possible to use that surplus for the purpose of financing a loan for capital works. And that, he said, would relieve the revenue budget.

He also said that the surplus would become available for those schemes of educational, sanitary and medical progress, which, he was sure, the Council had as much at heart as the Hon'ble Ministers in charge of them had. That was a solemn promise given by one of the previous Finance Members on the authority of the promise made by His Excellency the Governor in 1921. I do not know whether the present Hon'ble Finance Member is bound by it, but I wonder if he can refute certain figures I give below.

The closing balance of 1921-22 was Rs. 67,51,000. The closing balance of 1922-23 was Rs. 90,92,000 and that of 1923-24, Rs. 1,21,73,000. Next year the balance is expected to be Rs. 1,23,24,000. It is obvious that the surplus has gone on increasing. But has the promise been fulfilled? Then, again, I come to the other side of the picture. The expenditure has gone on increasing: In 1920-21 it was Rs. 9,16,89,000; in 1921-22 it was 10,48,22,000, leaving aside loan operations. In 1922-23 it was Rs. 9,59,64,000 and in 1924-25 it is expected to be Rs. 10,31,79,000. I wonder if, in accordance with the assurances given by Sir John Kerr to us in 1922, the expenditure had not been allowed to go on increasing to the extent it has, could this surplus in the ordinary course be employed for any other purpose but for floating a loan for capital accounts and for providing schemes in the transferred departments? How is the legislature at the present moment going to enforce this promise on the executive? It is a well-known fact that the Members of the Executive Government do not and cannot know the wishes of the people. Therefore, the only way to make them cognizant of the wishes of the people is either to refuse or to reduce a grant.

Coming to the budget itself, I find that the Hon'ble Finance Member is very glad that he has been able to make certain retrenchments. He says in page 4 of his speech that General Administration, Administration of Justice, Irrigation, Agriculture and Public Health and Police happen to share the most important items of retrenchments. He has deplored the fact that Rs. 12 lakhs had to be retrenched to the detriment of Police administration from the Police budget and he again says that the efficiency of the force has suffered in the absence of effective supervision. May I ask, supervision over whom? It is granted that only 13 per cent of the people of this country are literate. A most elaborate scheme to maintain law and order would be futile if the people do not know or are not intelligent

enough to understand the value of such measures. I am connected intimately with a very important educational institution and that is the University of Calcutta. Mr Mitter[1] was yesterday eloquent in his demand for further measures to help primary and secondary education in the province ; and he deplored that the Hon'ble Finance Member was wanting in statesmanship. Now, what is the position of the University with reference to this Council? I take it that the University had been established as a constituted authority to act on behalf of the Government whose primary duty is to provide education for the people. The University is charged to do that duty as the agent of the Government. Therefore, if the University is wanting in funds, the Government cannot absolve itself from all liabilities with regard to that. Calcutta University was given certain contributions from the Imperial Government in 1912 by Lord Hardinge, who said:

"I cannot regard the present facilities for higher education, higher studies and research as at all sufficient when not a few students who wish to take the M.A. degree have to be turned away for want of accommodation ; . . . Many of our undergraduates are engaged in advanced studies and research work and it is very important that we should turn out good M.A.s in sufficient numbers, otherwise it will be difficult to find capable lecturers for the schools and colleges."

That grant was given in 1912 and the same grant had been maintained by the Government of India and by the Bengal Government. But since 1912, Rs. 45 lakhs have been donated to the University by private benefactors. What has the Government done in response to it? I would refer to a speech of Sir Henry Wheeler who, with reference to the Kalimpong Homes and the Loreto Convent, said that these institutions attracted private generosity on an extensive scale and he urged eloquently that they were on that account entitled to liberal assistance from the public funds, for, as he put it tersely, "It is a sound business transaction to encourage private liberality." I want to know with reference to the University, what encouragement to private liberality has this Government or the Government of India given? Only the other day, as President of the Board of Accounts of Calcutta University, I had to turn down a modest request for

[1] Provas Chunder Mitter.

Rs. 4,000 only for chemicals to be used in the Science College, and the request came from Sir P. C. Ray, whose name is a household word in our country and who has given up a pay of Rs. 1,000 a month in consideration of the want of the same University! Mr Mitter has warned the members of the Council and of the Executive Government of their policy of neglecting primary and secondary education. I would warn the Government of their policy with regard to giving relief to the University.

Regarding Public Health and Medical Departments, in which I am most interested, a grant has been made of Rs. 1,20,000 for giving quinine to the different parts of the Province. Mr G. S. Dutt[1] said, in answering a question, that during the last year two millions of the people had been treated for malaria. If we used a little arithmetic, we would find that with this money two millions could receive treatment for three days only. Everyone knows that a persistent treatment for even three months will not drive malaria out of the human system. Therefore, that grant did nothing but tinker at the vast problem. It helped nobody.

The water-supply in the Province is very poor. I am told the heart of the Government has changed but the adamantine heart of Mr Donald has not. However, water has come out of stone to the extent that a provision of Rs. 50,000 has been made for rural water-supply. I belong to a small village in East Bengal,[2] where last year we had occasion to re-excavate one tank and the cost was Rs. 1,000; so, if Rs. 50,000 is provided, it will meet the cost of excavating 50 tanks and if each tank provides water for 500 people, Rs. 50,000 will relieve 25,000 people from the scarcity of water out of a population of 42 millions who reside in villages in different parts of the Province!

But water scarcity is not all. A great uneasiness has become manifest in India. There is a good deal of discomfort in the Province and it is no good hiding our heads in the sands. There is some rise of temperature, and a good deal of delirious talk naturally follows. If we apply the ordinary methods of diagnosis and treatment to the body politic that a physician generally does with regard to the human body, we shall find that the

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[1] Then Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Department of Local Self-Government.

[2] Dr Roy's ancestral home was in the village of Sripur, District Khulna. He was born at Bankipur, Patna, on 1 July 1882, and he had his school and undergraduate education in Bihar.

countless millions of the people in India are engaged daily in a grim struggle against death and disease. This disease is poverty and poverty brings disease in its train. This is a vicious circle. More than five million people suffer the death penalty every year from preventable diseases. Many days' work is lost yearly by each worker owing to the same cause and a very large number are left maimed for life. These are facts that can be ascertained by reference to the health figures. This state of affairs is so miserable that it is only the anodyne of fatalism that has enabled the people to endure suffering with resignation. Let us not forget that the treatment of diseases is costing the country yearly a large sum of money. Whenever any demand is made by the people for the expenditure of more money for medical relief, the poverty of the province is put forward as a plea, but poverty is to a great extent due to the preventable diseases. It would be an irony of fate if India is unable to pay for the remedies needed to restore her to health and prosperity. The countries that have done so and have deliberately purchased health have made a splendid bargain even from the business point of view. Control the preventable diseases, and increase the productive power, and the finances of India will be placed on a satisfactory footing. Sir, that is the message of the awakened India. The responsibilities of the Government of India and the Secretary of State and their local advisers are great ; as sure as day follows night, they will have to give an account of their stewardship to the people of the country. They will ask, why large sums of money are being spent on the ineffective efforts which are directed to soothe the sufferings of the injured rather than seeking and destroying the enemy. Let them remember that the first principle of warfare is to seek out the enemy—the causes of the preventable diseases. Make out an organized plan of campaign against them and the enemy of the crying millions will be stifled. Neglect it and the country will be prepared to fight against the present order of things ; and if they fight, they will be right.

27 February 1924

FOR 1925-26

THE Budget as presented is in such a form that an ordinary individual gets very much puzzled: for instance, I find on page 65 under the head "General Establishment", "Contract Contingencies, Postage and Telegraphic Charges", that the actuals in 1923-24 were Rs. 1,29,377, but under the head "Other Charges" have been debited Rs. 2,20,656. This year the Budget estimate comes to Rs. 3,09,600 and nothing under the head "Other Charges". So it is very difficult for any member to find out how the total under the head remains the same and how the transposition has taken place from one head to the other and naturally people begin to get confused. After all, it is a puzzle which the members of Council are, I suppose, not expected to unravel.

The Hon'ble the Finance Member has said that there is a policy behind the Budget. My friend, Babu Bejoy Krishna Bose, is more lucky than I am, as he says that he rubbed his eyes and found that there are three policies behind the Budget. I did not rub my eyes and, therefore, I did not see any policy behind the Budget which has been presented to us, except one of *laissez faire,* one of drift. I listened carefully to the speech delivered by Mr Donald before the Council and I have read also as carefully as I could the printed speech that was circulated, and it has given me the impression that the author is a stone image without imagination, which may inspire awe in his devotees, but to the uninitiated like ourselves, this speech has left behind a sense of despondency because our gods are totally unmindful of granting relief to the suffering millions. Like an advocate pleading for a bad cause, he has quoted figures to show that the transferred subjects have not been neglected. He has shown that, in spite of the fact that there have been no Ministers to guide the Government and to make demands on the public purse for their respective departments, the Government on the reserved side have not been unmindful of the claims of the transferred subjects, and out of the proposed new expenditure of Rs. 58½ lakhs, they had allocated Rs. 29½ lakhs for the transferred subjects and Rs. 20 lakhs for the reserved, leaving aside the allocation of Rs. 9½ lakhs for the police buildings, and if we exclude Civil Works, the figures are 7 lakhs for the reserved side and 17½ lakhs for the transferred departments. Should we not be grateful to the benign Government and applaud

both the proposals and the policy behind them? Does it not prove that the reserved side of the Government is quite capable and anxious to provide for the transferred side? *Ergo,* what is the use of having Ministers at all for the so-called transferred departments, when the work can be done, perhaps more satisfactorily, by the present quartette[1]?

The argument of Mr Donald[2] is obviously this: the total excess of expenditure over income on revenue account is above 89 lakhs. If the contribution of 63 lakhs is remitted, even then we shall have to draw to the extent of 26 lakhs from the balances of the previous years. Now, Sir, I raised the question last year and I raise the question again now and I shall continue to do so as long as it is my privilege to speak on the Budget, that those balances which have accrued from the imposition of new taxes—and the present Finance Member and his predecessors are promise-bound in this matter—should be devoted to a particular purpose. The great financier, the late Mr Gokhale, once said before the Imperial Legislative Council that it was very unwise for any Government to leave any balance because the tendency was to put the balance always into capital expenditure. It is best that, when the country is infested with malaria and other preventable diseases, the balances should be spent in fighting this menace.

The argument referred to above must have worked unconsciously in the mind of the Hon'ble Mr Donald because out of the extra provision to be made the sum of 26 lakhs has to be taken from the balances, and he may very well argue that as this 26 lakhs is meant for the transferred subjects, the promise has been kept. These arguments are very spacious, but suppose the provincial contributions are not remitted. Then in order to meet this sum of 63 lakhs new operations have to be stopped and the balances have to be drawn upon to meet the deficit of 33 lakhs on revenue account. The Hon'ble the Finance Member says that if the contributions are not remitted the proceeds from the new taxation will be swallowed up in meeting the normal wants of the administration, leaving nothing for progress or development, etc. Therefore, we see clearly that unless something is done immediately, so long as he holds the balances, his case for

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[1] Four members of the Executive Council: Sir Abd-ur-Rahim, Sir Hugh Stephenson, Mr J. Donald and Maharaja Kshaunish Chandra Ray.
[2] Mr J. Donald, member in charge of Finance.

the revision of the Meston Award,[1] even if the deficits on the revenue account are shown to the Government of India, may not have the same force on them as it would have if the balances were invested in a loan as was suggested to the Government last year. The Government of India would then be told that, in view of previous undertaking, the raising of loan was urgently necessary. We know that the Government, constituted as it is, uninfluenced and uninfluenceable by the force of public opinion, cannot embark on any scheme or policy which is not time-honoured, and the result, we find, is that Mr Das' scheme,[2] which he put forward before the Council last year, has been mutilated beyond recognition. I had the honour and privilege of working out that scheme partly. Mr Donald thinks that he has to a certain extent satisfied the people of Bengal by taking advantage of that scheme when he says that the Government are not slow to consider proposals put before them by the members of the Council. I am really sad to think that Mr Donald cannot or will not recognize the fundamental principles underlying Mr Das' proposal. I do not complain that a provision of Rs. 1,25,000 only has been made for this proposal this year. No scheme can be carried into effect in one year and, therefore, the expenditure must be spread over a large number of years. But what I do complain of is that Mr Donald has taken the shadow and left the substance of the scheme behind. I will read out for the purpose of letting the members know the main proposals underlying that scheme:

"That a certain sum of money should be funded and earmarked for specific purposes, and that different amounts are to be allotted for the different heads and they should be administered as a Trust Fund. They

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[1] The Government of India Act of 1919 abolished the system of "divided heads" of revenue and introduced a clear-cut separation between Central and Provincial taxes.

It was feared that the Centre would run deficits unless the Provinces would contribute a part of their revenues to the Central exchequer. The Meston Committee was appointed in 1920 to recommend the basis and scale of such contributions. The Committee recommended an initial scale of annual contributions from the Provinces to the Centre, the total being Rs. 983 lakhs. The highest figure was fixed for Madras (Rs. 348 lakhs), while the Province of Bihar and Orissa was entirely exempted. Bengal's contribution was fixed at Rs. 63 lakhs per year. It was also decided that the contributions would gradually be reduced.

The system, brought into operation in 1921-22, was strongly resented by the Provinces, particularly by those which found that their own elastic sources of revenue had been taken away. The gradual improvement of the Central finances led to substantial remissions, particularly from 1925-26. Bengal had to be granted remission from the very beginning. No contribution was taken by the Centre in 1927-28 and the system was completely abolished in 1928-29.

[2] See Appendix.

should be given over to a Board of Trust like the Calcutta Improvement Trust, and secondly, *pari passu* with this allocation of funds, local authorities should be constituted which will be charged with the responsibility of administering the revenues allocated to them by the Central Board of Trustees who shall exercise a general supervision over the local units."

There is a vast difference between this scheme and what Mr Donald has proposed, apart from the question of the amount that has been allocated. In the first place, with regard to budget allotments, the chief difference in the outlook between the bureaucracy and ourselves has always been this: there is a fundamental disparity in the points of view between their method of allocating funds and ours. No one can argue that any Government can be run without funds, nor is it seriously suggested that from the Government point of view, the present Government or the Government of the past have wilfully squandered money, but surely, if we are to consider the budget at all, we must be prepared to tell the Government, "Your methods do not appeal to us. With the best of intentions in the world you cannot change your policy ; you are accustomed to work in a particular groove and you cannot get out of it." Therefore, with regard to the nation-saving departments—I purposely use the word "nation-saving" and not "nation-building" because we are going to be extinct unless some steps are taken immediately and because it is a question of life and death to us—the suggestion of Mr Das was that the expenditure should be under the control of a board and the money should be earmarked for a particular purpose. This board should be held responsible for evolving schemes of public utility and their actions will be subject to the ordinary Trust law.

My next point is that the provision of Rs. 1,25,000 has been made for the purpose of subsidies to the district boards. Anyone who has a running knowledge of a district board knows that each district board has a jurisdiction of 3,000 square miles on an average and it cannot possibly control nor can it be held responsible for the sanitation of the district. The essence of the proposal put forward was that the entire charge of sanitation should be specifically laid upon a particular board like the Health Board in England and to one board alone who in turn will supervise the work done

by local authorities responsible to them. These local authorities again must be developed not as agents of the Government but they should be granted power of local management and thus a real form of local self-government would develop. Instead of that it is proposed to grant Rs. 1,25,000 to the district boards without any central board to control their activities in matters of sanitation and without the creation of local authorities.

Here the member reached the time-limit and was given two minutes more to finish his speech.

Lastly, no such scheme is possible unless there is a growing living interest in the people whom such scheme will affect. I say, therefore, that it is not only necessary to provide the money but at the same time to provide for the creation of such local authorities.

Sir, Sir Hugh Stephenson said last year and so does Mr Donald this year that there was no scheme for spending money on. When the Calcutta Improvement Trust was created, was there any scheme ready?

The last question that I would like to touch upon is of special interest to me because it is in my own province: the question of provision for controlling the epidemic diseases. It is said that there is no scheme of the local bodies for which they have asked for more money! Now, Sir, I say where are your local bodies? The creation of local bodies is essential before you can get the proper return for the money given to them. Then, Mr Donald says that the anti-malaria societies will take up the work against malaria and, therefore, the allocation to this item has been reduced from Rs. 1,00,000 to Rs. 50,000. On this point I would just read out what the Rockefeller Foundation Board has said:

"Public health is essentially a function of the Government. No private or temporary agency, whatever its resources, would or should discharge responsibilities which by their nature belong to the constituted authorities of the country. Private enterprise, therefore, may be best employed in awakening public opinion and thereby encouraging State and country officials to establish permanent agencies for public health work. Responsibility for the control and cure of any disease can never be assumed by voluntary agency."

I do not understand why it is said by Mr Donald that this work should be done by a voluntary agency.

MR PRESIDENT [SIR EVAN COTTON]: That is a very good stopping point, Dr Roy.

DR BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY: One more sentence, Sir. I find that the last item under epidemic disease is for anti-cholera measures for which a provision of Rs. 16,000 was made last year and has been omitted this year. This has also been done because there is no scheme for anti-cholera work. Nearly 80,000 people die of cholera every year in Bengal, and I do not know whether Mr Donald would insist that the cholera patients before dying should send up an anti-cholera scheme for the consideration of the Government. I give the same warning as I did last year. If the Government want to be popular, let them develop the local authorities, decentralize their powers and give up this method of organized opposition to the wishes of the people. The people whom God has put under your care will bless you. If you do not, no ordinances and secret police can save you and us from certain ruin.

27 February 1925

Grants to Schools for Europeans and Anglo-Indians

I SHALL take only a few minutes. I have listened very carefully to the speeches that have been made in this Council Chamber and the only argument that appeals to me with regard to the suggestion made by Babu Akhilchandra Datta is this: That in education there should be no distinction so far as race or community is concerned. This I apply not only with regard to the European and Anglo-Indian education but also with regard to the Muhammadan education. I was taught in the Calcutta Medical College, where the Anglo-Indian, European, Muhammadan and Hindu students all sat and talked and were taught together, and I think they, all of them, were the better for it. I was waiting to hear what the Hon'ble Member in charge[1] had to say in defence of this grant for special purposes and for a special community and I find he makes the statement that the amount granted is very modest, only Rs. 11 lakhs, considering that the community itself spends nearly 33 lakhs for the education of its children. I consider that a very strong argument indeed, but when I look to the Administration Report of 1921-22 I find a statement which, I am sure, most of the members have not seen and which runs contrary to the one made in this Council Chamber. You, Sir, have made a remark in the course of discussion that better education means more taxation. I find that during the year 1921-22 the total number of students taught in the different schools in Bengal were 91,45,145 ; the total expenditure was Rs. 333 lakhs,

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Speech on a motion moved by Akhilchandra Datta during the discussion of the Education Budget of the Government of Bengal, 1924-25, that the demand for Rs. 58,000 for non-Government Secondary schools for Europeans and Anglo-Indians be refused. Srijut Datta had earlier moved that the demand for Rs. 2,56,000 (recurring) for direct grants to non-Government Secondary schools for Europeans and Anglo-Indians be reduced by half.

[1] The Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Burdwan, Sir Bijaychand Mahtab.

of which Rs. 135 lakhs had been contributed from the provincial revenues and the balance had either been contributed by the pupils or received from endowments, subscriptions and other sources. The latter, I take it, was a direct taxation realized from the parents and guardians of the students who had been taught in the different schools. The figures in the Blue Book do not give the statement clearly. If you take education as a whole, you must take the total cost of education for the whole of Bengal and also find out how much has been contributed from public revenues and how much by individual communities to which the students belong. If you look from that standpoint the argument made out by the Hon'ble the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Burdwan would not seem to be so strong and effective as it was supposed to be at the beginning.

The next argument he brings forward is that the mode of living, the mode of education imparted, the cost of teachers and the quality of buildings have to be considered. I do not know whether the items under consideration refer to schools and institutions to which boarding-houses are attached. It seems to me that we should consider the cost only of education imparted to the students and not the cost of boarding for such students. Difference in the mode of living cannot be an argument for giving more money to a particular community as against other communities.

As to the cost of education, I have always looked upon this question from a different standpoint. If in education one community happens to be more advanced than another we want to improve the backward one. We want to spend more money on the institutions meant for the less advanced boys because it is more difficult to teach infants and small boys; it is more difficult to get teachers for the primary schools than to get teachers for higher grade schools. Not only must the teachers of primary schools possess the qualifications for teaching a particular subject but they must also be qualified in forming the character of little boys and girls while they are at their impressionable age.

Therefore, the mode of living and the cost of education imparted cannot be a sufficient argument for giving a disproportionately higher grant to the European community as against other communities. I have always maintained and shall continue to maintain that we have made a fetish of buildings for institutions. There is my college, I mean the Belgachia

Medical College, and the Calcutta Medical College. I maintain that the difference in the length and breadth of glass panes in the different laboratories and in the size of rooms and the number of electric fans make no difference as regards the quality of teaching imparted. I hope the Hon'ble the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Burdwan in his reply to this amendment will meet these points and give us convincing arguments. He has promised that as soon as the budget discussion is finished he will take the matter up thoroughly, and solve the problem and put the whole situation in such a form that we shall have no difficulty in understanding the budget in future years.

27 March 1924

Dacca University

I BEG to move, by way of amendment to the motion of the Hon'ble Sir Abd-ur-Rahim, that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee consisting of the Hon'ble Sir Abd-ur-Rahim, Dr Pramathanath Banerjea, Mr A. F. Rahman, Sir Provash Chunder Mitter, Babu Bejoy Krishna Bose, Babu Manmatha Nath Roy, Rai Harendranath Chaudhuri, Maulavi Wahed Hossain, Mr J. H. Lindsay, Dr Abdulla Suhrawardy and myself, five to form a quorum, with instructions to submit their report before the 15th November, 1925, for presentation to the Council.

I am very sorry that Sir Abd-ur-Rahim should have ended his speech in the way he did, by appealing to communal feelings. It was he who complained about certain opinions expressed and some sectional arguments advanced with regard to Dacca University, yet what he himself said towards the end of his speech is: "The Muhammadans deserve special benefit." In order to induce members of the House to vote for his Bill, why must he think it necessary to refer to communal benefits? Then, again, he said, by way of illustration, that in the Calcutta University Senate there were only six Muhammadans. Who, may I ask, is responsible for this state of affairs? There are 100 members in the Senate, of whom about 90 members are nominated by the Government. The Hon'ble Member himself or his predecessor must have been responsible for this state of affairs and it is not Calcutta University which can be blamed for it. He has raised this question, has appealed to the communal feelings and said: "Do not grudge any benefit to the Muhammadans in Eastern Bengal." For myself, I shall be glad to see not one University in Dacca, not one University in Eastern

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Speech moving an amendment to The Dacca University (Amendment) Bill, 1925, introduced by Sir Abd-ur-Rahim, making provision of a statutory annual grant of Rs. Five lakhs and a half to Dacca University. The motion of Dr Roy was that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee with instructions to submit their report before 15 November 1925, which was negatived.

Bengal but practically one University in every division of Bengal, and then only I and the public opinion will be satisfied. At the very outset I wish to make my position perfectly clear, and I repeat what I said as a signatory to the Government Grant Committee Report, which was submitted to the Senate in the year 1922, and this is what we said:

"We desired to emphasize that if education is to be our policy as a nation, it must not be guided by our politics: freedom is its very life-blood, the condition of its growth, the secret of its success; it demands liberty as well as support. We shall in this connection refer to only one other opinion, that of Professor Sir William Ridgeway of the University of Cambridge, who thus concludes his instructive paper on 'Cambridge and the Royal Commission' in *The Quarterly Review*, October 1922:

'To sum up, the acceptance of a Government grant is fraught with the gravest danger. Unless it is made a permanent charge on the consolidated fund it will prove fatal to the autonomy of the University.' "

Sir, I stick to every word that was said in the report, and yet I have made up my mind to move the amendment which stands in my name for this reason.

The legislature is naturally anxious to exercise some control over the Universities and to ensure that adequate financial safeguards are provided, so that the money granted is well and properly spent; not only that, in a growing University like Dacca University, it is essential that public opinion should have ample liberty and scope in framing, guiding and modifying its policy from time to time.

We know that Dacca University owed its origin to a demand from a certain section of the people and that the representatives of the people should have an opportunity of indicating to the University, from time to time, whether they desire the money to be spent in one particular direction or not; for instance, whether they wish that a portion of the money should be spent for the backward communities or that more money should be spent for the purpose of developing military training or vocational training for the students in the University. The Hon'ble Sir Abd-ur-Rahim has introduced a great deal of extraneous matters for the purpose of pushing forward his own Bill. He says that Dacca is a good centre for a residential University. No one denies that now, and nobody ever denied that in the past, and I

hope no one will deny that in the future. He says Dacca University has numerous wants, which University has not? There is perhaps no University in the world which has sufficient funds of its own to be able to do without State grants. In this connection, he has also said that for years Calcutta University has carried on its work without any grants. But he has forgotten to mention that for years that University was merely an examining body and the distress from which it now suffers is due to its having given effect to the Act of the Imperial Legislature of 1904, according to which it is to promote teaching and research. I do not follow, why the Hon'ble Member should have used this argument at all. Is it intended to show that because Calcutta University has been maintaining itself and meeting its own expenses from the fee funds, it should not get any assistance from the Government? May I be permitted to quote what Sir Henry Wheeler said in connection with the grants he asked for from the Council for the Kalimpong Homes and the Loreto Convent? He said that those institutions had attracted public generosity on an extensive scale, and he urged eloquently that they were entitled, because of that, to liberal assistance from the public funds for, as he put it tersely, "it is a sound business transaction to encourage private liberality". I hope Sir Abdur Rahim does not dispute that Sir Henry Wheeler was a very capable businessman, so far as the Council's transactions were concerned. The real question at issue is not whether Dacca University should obtain a State grant. I will not perhaps be divulging a secret if I say that I made an application, on behalf of Calcutta University, to Sir Abdur Rahim, the Member in charge of Education, that the grant to be made to this University might be made 'non-voted', or at least a portion of it might be made so. Therefore, I do not ask whether it is essential that grants should be made in such a way that voting in the Council do not affect the work of the University, so that those employed under the University may have a surety of tenure and their prospects assured. These are questions which Sir Abdur Rahim has raised but they do not really require arguing at this stage. What I would wish to ask at the present moment is: Has the Government been able to satisfy this Council that the amount of Rs. 5,50,000 is the minimum which

* Dr. Roy was President, Board of Accounts, Calcutta University.

Council the fact that Dacca University had in the past been employing men Dacca University wants? I will mention to you and to members of the who had previously worked in Calcutta University. I will quote the salaries some of these men had drawn in the two Universities and you will see what the differences are. Dr Ramesh Chandra Majumdar was drawing Rs. 425 in Calcutta University and he is now getting a salary of Rs. 600 to Rs. 1,000. Dr Jnan Chandra Ghosh was drawing Rs. 225 here.

MAULVI A. K. FAZLUL HUQ: May I raise a point of order? Is the Hon'ble member in order in discussing the question of salaries?

MR PRESIDENT: Dr Roy, please go on.

DR BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY: Dr Ghosh who has been an University Professor in Dacca is now getting there Rs. 1,000. My position is this: if the services of these particular gentlemen are so valuable, by all means have their services, but let there be a fixed pay attached to every specified post under Dacca University. The gentlemen who are now enjoying the amenities at Dacca University may have been employed for certain terms and by all means let the Council give them the extra sum they may be getting over and above the pay to be fixed.

MR F. E. JAMES: I want to know whether these are the salaries which **are being paid now.**

DR BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY: I have got the report of the Post-Graduate Organization Committee and the Budget of Dacca University which give these figures and these are open to the public. I need not go into the other examples, but will only say that, unless you determine the lowest or the minimum cost of running Dacca University, it will affect other Universities in two ways: first of all, the Government revenues being very limited at present, the Government cannot pay as much as they wish to do to all the Universities. Last year, when the Government met the representation of Calcutta University with regard to the deficit that the University has been suffering from year to year, it was pointed out to the Government that it would be necessary to go into details of the expenditure of several years before a minimum expenditure of a year could be determined. The members of the Council must have received the report which was issued after 75 sittings were held. This will show that the proposition such as this, namely, to find out the real needs of a University, cannot be taken light heartedly.

The members of Dacca University must be asked to sit together and find out the minimum costs necessary to run it; they must also be asked to fix specified scale of pay to specific posts. In order to avoid possible hardships every person already appointed for certain terms should continue to get what he is getting in excess of the salary that may now be fixed for his post.

There is another aspect to which I would like to draw the attention of the members of the House. We find it difficult to get properly qualified men for Calcutta University because within half a day's journey from Calcutta they can get a higher salary in Dacca. We are likely to lose our men unless we can also pay them here a higher salary. It is the Government that will have to pay the money here as well as in Dacca. This difference in the scales of pay would lead to an increase in the costs of running both Universities. Therefore, my proposition is: Let the Select Committee frame certain issues and put them to Dacca University as well as to other Universities which will be affected by this Bill. It will not be very late if in the November session of the Council the matter is brought forward again with all the information, so that we can go to the public and say that we have done this with our eyes open. It has been said that both motions are dilatory. For the present the grant for this year has already been sanctioned by this Council, and even if we wait till November, it will not affect the present incumbents. I would, therefore, appeal to the members of the House to support my motion, the purpose of which is neither to obstruct nor to refuse the grant, but to elicit more information, so that it may be possible for us to place, before the members of the Council and the public, what should be the minimum amount required by Dacca University and must be given by the Council.

18 August 1925

Grants to Calcutta University

I BEG to move that this Council recommends to the Government that provision be made, in the supplementary budget as well as in the budgets for the succeeding years, for an annual grant of Rs. 3,00,000 to meet the recurring deficit of Calcutta University, as revealed in the finding of the Senate while it was considering the report of the Post-Graduate Reorganization Committee.

I owe it to myself as a humble worker of the University, and I also owe it to the members of this Council to put before them the whole case of Calcutta University as clearly as I can. In the first place, I shall draw attention to two points of my resolution: the first is that provision be made for this year as well as the succeeding years; and the second is that the provision be made for Rs. three lakhs. I shall try to explain these points so as to make it clear that what is being asked in the resolution is just enough to carry on the work of the University properly.

My first reason for asking for a recurring grant is the same as the one I put forward when I was moving my amendment for referring the Dacca University Bill to a Select Committee. I made it clear then that, if any University is to run efficiently, the teachers and the staff should have some permanency of tenure, some prospect in view, and they should work in an atmosphere of certainty. If these conditions are essential to carry on the work of any institution, then they are doubly essential for a University because, if it works inefficiently, it hurts not only the teachers but also the taught. Therefore, a recurring grant is essential, if we are to have efficient teachers as well as properly educated students.

My second reason for asking for a recurring grant is that without a certainty of income it is impossible for a University to make any plans for the future. It is true that on three occasions the Bengal Government had given to this University certain sums of money, but that was to meet the

deficits at the end of a financial year. No plan can be made on the mere expectation of a grant; for that there should be effective promise. May I further remind the House that a University is not like a Government which can raise their income by raising their taxes. But the only way open to this University to raise its income is by increasing the examination fees of the students, and, to a certain extent, by increasing the tuition fees of the Post-Graduate students. Even to do so the sanction of the Government is required, and I may inform the House that on many occasions the University was prepared to resort to this unpopular course of raising its income by increasing the fees of the students, but the Government refused.

My third reason for asking for a recurring grant is due to the Government's attitude. To make it clear I have to go back and relate, as shortly as I can, the past history of the development of the Post-Graduate Department. In the year 1912, on the 16th of March, His Excellency Lord Hardinge in his convocation speech said:

"I cannot regard the present facilities for higher studies as at all sufficient. It is very important that it should turn out good M.A.'s in sufficient number; otherwise it will be difficult to find capable lecturers for our colleges or to provide adequately for research. Impressed by these consideration which are not peculiar to Calcutta University, and remembering the stirring words which His Imperial Majesty addressed to the members of our Senate, the Government of India have decided to make a solid advance in the direction of teaching and residential Universities. They have allotted a recurring grant of Rs. 65,000 a year, for the appointment of University Professors and Lecturers."

That was the starting point of the Post-Graduate Department and, may I add, of the financial embarassment of the University. In the same year, Sir Taraknath Palit gave a donation of Rs. 15 lakhs to the University. The University felt that a new life had come over the country, that the Government were getting more sympathetic to the educational needs of the province. Therefore, it applied, on the 30th of December, 1912, for financial aid in order to make up for the deficit which the post-graduate teaching would entail. On the 14th of January, 1913, the reply came from the Government of India which said:

"The Government of India are not aware what grants, if any, they will be able to assign for education during the ensuing financial year. The requests of Calcutta University will receive consideration in conjunction with the claims of other Universities and of other branches of education."

This University was not to be daunted and it applied again, on the 4th October, 1913, to which a reply came on the 23rd December, 1913, which said:

"When funds are available, the request of the University for further grants for higher teaching will be considered in conjunction with other demands."

On the 13th of March, 1915, another application was made to the Government of India. No reply was given for two and a half years. On the 9th August, 1917, the Government of India said:

"The Government of India propose to defer consideration of the question of granting financial assistance in this connection to the University, pending receipt of the recommendations of the proposed Calcutta University Commission."

On the 16th of December, 1918, Lord Chelmsford, as Chancellor of the University, said in this very hall, in his convocation address: "If the Commission were unanimous in their main recommendation, I would lose no time in giving effect to them."

Sir, Commissions have come and Commissions have gone, and many of the other Universities have benefited by them, but Calcutta University, for which obviously this Commission was instituted, remains where it was. However, it went on appealing to the Government of India while they held the reins of the University. It applied once again on the 31st March, 1920, to which no reply has yet been vouchsafed. The Bengal Government, which stepped into the shoes of the Government of India, were also applied to on the 5th of February, 1921 and again on the 15th February, 1922. I shall not burden the memory of the members of the Council with further dates, because our applications were legion. But no recurring grant has yet been made to this University. The Bengal Government have, it is true, as I have said before, made some grants to meet the liabilities of certain years, but for the last 12 years the recurrent grant has remained what it was in 1913. Sir, the great liberal statesman, the

late Sir Surendra Nath Banerjea, once said: "The path of the British Government in this country is strewn with broken promises and unfulfilled pledges." It is very difficult to know what is in the mind of the Government at a particular moment, and that is one of the reasons, my third reason as I have just said, for asking for the assurance of a recurring grant. I do not blame the Government Member in charge of Education. The education of the people of Bengal is Government's responsibility and the Government have created a body to work under a constitution for the purpose of attending to this object. Therefore, the University is the agent of the Government for educating the youths of Bengal. It is difficult for any Member of the Government, unless he is in touch with the University for a certain number of years, to understand all the complexities of the situation. But the bureaucratic system is such that a Member who is today in charge of the Department of Education is tomorrow transported to the *gadi* of the Governor of another province! And what about his adviser, his secretary? He comes in through this door, sits in this chair on the right-hand today, tomorrow he sits in the middle, and the next day he goes out of this chamber to become commissioner of a division! How can we expect the Department of Government to understand the complex requirements of Calcutta University? (*Hear, hear*).

Sir, my fourth reason for asking for a recurring grant is equally important. I am very anxious about retaining the academic freedom. I am anxious that in securing grants the University must not lose its freedom and initiative. There should be the least possible Government interference. If the University has to come to the Council every year for the annual grant, if the University, as I said when I was moving my amendment to the Dacca University Bill, has to depend upon the chance voting, it will be difficult for it to work efficiently, for in order to secure the annual grant it will be obliged to explain, once every year, its position and working before the Council. This might hamper the freedom of the University.

Sir Harcourt Butler, himself a great educationist and born of a family of educationists, said on the 4th of November, 1922, as Chancellor of the University of Allahabad:

"There is one matter which causes me some little apprehension, namely, a tendency to interfere with the freedom and initiative of the University

from outside. The great Commission on the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge which has recently published its report—the last word on University education—while recommending the increase of annual Government grants to each University from £30,000 to £110,000 sterling, largely for extension of research, entered a solemn warning against Government interference, which is applicable to other external interferences in this country."

In *The Times Educational Supplement* of the 21st April, 1921, there appeared a note by a University teacher. He says:

"While Government money will have to be given to the Universities, and control exercised, such control means no more and no less than an assurance that the money is well and properly spent. That this assurance can be secured without any derogation from the dignity of the University or any deprivation of its academic freedom, a survey of the existing system will show. Petty-fogging interference and stupid red-tapism will persist as long as there are Government departments and human nature remains the same, but they can be successfully resisted, and on occasions given short shrift. The great teaching body of the Universities, University colleges, and institutions of University rank, notwithstanding their grievances, will not sell their academic freedom for a mess of pottage."

Mr Fisher, the Minister in charge of Education, and one of the foremost educationists in Great Britain, enunciated the policy which Calcutta University has upheld and more than endorsed. He says:

"No one appreciates more fully than myself the vital importance of preserving the liberty and autonomy of the Universities within the general lines laid down under their constitution. The State is, in my opinion, not competent to direct the work of education and disinterested research which is carried on by Universities, and the responsibility for its conduct must rest solely with their governing bodies and teachers. This is a principle which has always been observed in the distribution of the funds which Parliament has voted for subsidising University work ; and so long as I have any hand in shaping the national system of education, I intend to observe this principle."

I make this quotation an offering to the Hon'ble Member in charge of Education. I think I have made it perfectly clear that in order to

maintain efficiency it is essential that the University should have a recurring grant.

I now pass on to the next point of my resolution, namely that the grant must be Rs. 3 lakhs. Sir Abd-ur-Rahim drew a very happy picture of the finances of Calcutta University. I do not presume, nor have I any desire, to change places with him, but may I request him to come and sit with me and look at the University's empty coffers and large demands, and also at the promises it has from time to time received from the Government. He will then know the difficulties which the President of the Board of Accounts has to meet. But what are the revenues of the University? They are the fee funds, the much maligned Law College funds and the various trust funds. I take the trust funds first. In each case the donor has laid down certain conditions, mainly for the appointment of professors for the purpose of research. These funds have not helped the University but has affected its funds in one sense ; one of the conditions of each of these trusts is that the University shall provide these teachers with sufficient accommodation, laboratories, museums, assistance and so forth ; but some of these this University has unfortunately not been able to provide because of the depleted funds. Therefore, I would leave the trust funds alone. If you take the ordinary fee fund of the University and its ordinary expenditure, what do you find? I have worked it out in detail but I will only put before the House the main figures from 1919 to 1925. Anybody who is conversant with finance knows that it is always very unsafe to take as a guide the financial condition of one year or even of two years. I find, after deducting from the fee fund such expenditure as incurred on establishment, payment to examiners, etc., the balances during the last five years as follows:

1919-20	2,28,000
1920-21	3,21,000
1921-22	3,15,000
1922-23	3,08,000
1923-24	2,60,000
1924-25	3,00,000

After meeting ordinary expenditure of the University from the fee fund, the average amount left over is a little less than Rs. 3,00,000. But

I may perhaps be told, why not take all the other funds together? I have calculated the average balance of five years, as left over after meeting the ordinary expenditure of the fee fund as well as of the Law College and Hardinge Hostel; and I find the average of the past three years a little over Rs. 3,33,000. Therefore, if the Post-Graduate Department is to run, the only amount that can be contributed from the finances of the University cannot be more than Rs. 3,33,000 on an average. These are questions of fact and not matters of opinion.

The next question is what would be the expenditure in the Post-Graduate Department? The Senate, while applying to the Government for a grant of Rs. 3,00,000, said that the average expenditure on this account was likely to be Rs. 6,33,000. Much has been made of a division in the Senate. Last year, when we applied to the Government for a recurrent financial aid, we were asked, "What is your deficit?" We were not prepared to give the Government any information on that point until a committee was appointed to go into the whole question and find out the correct figure. As has been said many times in this House, 75 sittings were held for this purpose, numerous witnesses examined, and a large bulk of evidences gathered. Two reports were made based on these findings: one signed by 16 out of the 20 members of the Committee appointed and the other by the remaining 4 members. It has been said that the minority report is before the Government now along with the majority report, and the Government therefore must find out for themselves the true position. May I inform the House that this Committee was appointed not by the Government but by the Senate, and the two reports were, accordingly, submitted to the Senate. Seventy-five out of the 100 members of the Senate attended five meetings held to consider the reports, and, eventually, by an overwhelming majority, the Senate accepted the conclusions of the majority report. As soon as this position is accepted, the question of two reports does not arise. And this is not an opinion which only I hold. Mr Oaten, the Director of Public Instruction, who was present at that meeting, immediately after the decision was arrived at, said:

"After today there is no minority and no majority. The Senate would decide and have already decided between them. After today they would forget their battles and remember that they are both working not for a

party, not for a majority or a minority but for the good of the country as a whole and the advancement of learning in Bengal."

These are noble words! I hope Mr Oaten will be able to press upon the Member-in-charge for Education this view regarding the reports of the majority and the minority that he had taken in the Senate. If the Members of the Government have any objection to the academic aspects of the reports, the reports have been before them for consideration for quite some time. Sir Abd-ur-Rahim himself is a Fellow of the University but he was not present at any one of its sittings. Why did he not put this side of the question before the Senate? The Senate would have given him a respectful hearing and would certainly have given sufficient consideration to any suggestion that he might have made.

THE HON'BLE SIR ABD-UR-RAHIM: I was not present at the meeting.

DR BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY: That is exactly what I say. The Hon'ble Member was not present at any of the meetings. Why was he not present? Since the Senate has come to a decision he, as a Member of the Senate, must recognize that the majority and the minority reports have merged and consequently there is now only one report before the Government, and that report is embodied in the letter which has been forwarded by the University to the Government. Therefore, I maintain that it is now too late for any Member of the Government to say that he is considering the majority or the minority report.

The position in a nutshell is this: The Post-Graduate Department needs annually for the next five years the sum of Rs. 6,33,000 on an average, and the amount which Calcutta University can give from its own funds to the Post-Graduate teaching fund—taking all the funds together except the trust fund—is a little over three lakhs. Where is the rest of the money to come from? Sir, I cannot presume to know what Sir Abd-ur-Rahim is going to say. Nor do I know, Sir, whom you will allow the privilege of replying. If I had the last word in the matter I should certainly be pleased, but I do not know. However, I am interested to know and I wonder what points the Hon'ble Member is going to raise. Surely he is not going to tell us that we must give the Government a little more time to consider the report. They have already had time to consider it, from June to August. The report is quite clear. What is there to consider? I

say again and I say deliberately that the Government have no justification at this stage to consider the majority or the minority report. The Government are represented in Calcutta University by their Minister of Education who is an *ex-officio* member of the Senate. What is he there for? The only presumable reason is that he is there to put the Government view-point before the Senate. Unfortunately, there is no Minister now and Sir Abd-ur-Rahim has taken his place. Therefore, he should have pointed out.

The next point that may be raised is this. Look at the past conduct of the University, we may be asked. It has not been like Caesar's wife above suspicion! There have been imperfections in the University. What institution is perfect? The Government themselves are not perfect. And I can prove that if I am given only half an hour and if the mind of the Hon'ble Member is open to conviction. A good deal of the University's imperfections are due to the fact that its financial outlook is so uncertain. Legislature need have no fear, for it is the supreme body. It can scrap the whole Act and it can remove the University if it wishes to do so. The Government hold the whip in one hand and the purse string in the other. Their auditors haunt about the University buildings for nine months in the year. Every report, every budget estimate, every proceeding of the Senate is sent to the Government; every change in the regulations has got to get the sanction of the Government. No new expenditure can be incurred without the sanction of the Government. No new expenditure can be incurred unless sanctioned by the Senate whose proceedings are sent up to the Government. What more financial safeguards do the Government want, I do not know. Finally, let me remind the members of this House and the Hon'ble Member-in-charge that within the splendid constitution we are working under today, our resolutions can have the effect of only recommendations. They have no mandatory effect whatever.

At this stage the member reached his time-limit, but he was allowed by the Hon'ble the President to go on.

There is one point I should like to make perfectly clear, as I may not have another opportunity of doing so. Dr Banerjea[1] in his resolution has

[1] Dr Pramathanath Banerjea, Minto Professor of Economics, Calcutta University.

asked for a recurring grant of Rupees one lakh and a non-recurring grant of two lakhs. Those who have not read his resolution might think that there is a difference between his resolution and mine. I want to remind the House that he has asked for one lakh in addition to the two lakhs which, he assumes, with his optimism, would be a permanent recurring grant to the University. I have, however, my doubts about it.

19 August 1925

A similar motion moved earlier (17 August) by Khagendranath Ganguly being agreed to, Dr Roy's motion was not put.

Government Interference in Calcutta University

I HAD no desire at first to take part in this debate but the speeches made by Sir Provash Chunder Mitter[1] yesterday and by Mr Oaten[2] today force me to say a few words in this connection. Mr Oaten has made two statements, which I feel I must challenge. The first one is that there are now six official members in the Syndicate. This is not correct as Professor Mahalanabis and Colonel Bernardo are also in the service of the Government and are members of the Syndicate. Therefore, there are eight members and not six. I must say also that he is incorrect in his statement that before 1924 there were no Muhammadan members. Dr Hassan Suhrawardy was elected in the year 1922-23 as well as in 1923-24. No one can deny that Dr Suhrawardy is a Muhammadan. But what I want to ask him is this: if it was his desire that Muhammadan interests should be represented in the Syndicate, why did he not nominate a non-official Muhammadan? Was there no non-official Muhammadan on the Senate? Mr Faz-lul Huq is a Muhammadan member of the Senate and so is Sir Abd-ur-Rahim who has ceased to be a Member of the Government. Either of them could easily have been nominated; but instead of doing that why did he nominate an official Muhammadan to represent their views on the Syndicate? He has not denied, when a challenge was thrown out to him, that there was a meeting of nominated members of the Senate at the Secretariat on the two days as mentioned by Mr Akhilchandra Datta.

I would challenge him on another point. Does he deny that at that

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Speech on Manmathanath Roy's motion for a token cut to the demand for grant to Calcutta University as a protest against an attempt to officialize the administration of the University.

[1] Formerly Minister in charge of Education.
[2] E. F. Oaten, Director of Public Instruction.

meeting a list of names was drawn up for election both to the Syndicate and to the different Faculties of the Senate, and that a list of the names, who should be voted for, was placed by a Government servant in the hands of the members who were present at the meeting? And is it not a fact also that the members were required to vote in accordance with the mandate of the Secretariat? Sir, Mr Oaten has said that the move was taken by them because they wanted to maintain a high standard of education. Is this the way in which the Government want to maintain the standard of education at the University? Does Mr Oaten want us to believe that Dr Nilratan Sarkar, who was Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University, and has served it for the last 20 or 25 years, is not a fit person to maintain the standard of education in Bengal, while Mr Charu Chandra Biswas, who is not even a teacher, is better qualified to do that? What was the result of the decision arrived at at the Secretariat meeting? A mandate went forth that they should not vote for Dr Ganesh Prasad and Mr S. C. Mahalanabis for the Faculty of Arts. What has been the result? Dr Ganesh Prasad, the Hardinge Professor of Mathematics, has, during the past years, been the President of the Board of Studies in Mathematics, a department under the Faculty of Arts. Now he has been driven out of the Faculty by the fiat of the Director of Public Instruction and the Secretary of the Government in the Department of Education. Is it, I ask, in the interest of education in this province that Dr Ganesh Prasad should cease to be the President of the Board of Studies in Mathematics? Professor Mahalanabis is Professor of Biology and Physiology in the Presidency College. His services in the departments of Anthropology and Experimental Psychology, which are also under the Faculty of Arts, have been invaluable and yet he has been driven out of the Faculty of Arts. Has all this been done because the presence of these men in the Faculty of Arts would lower the standard of education or has all this been done because on certain occasions they voted in a way which displeased the Director? On the other hand, we find that the Secretariat ordered that Mr Charu Chandra Biswas should be put in the Faculties of Arts and Law, because, forsooth, he was a teacher in neither of the Faculties. Is that also maintaining a standard of education?

No, Sir, the reason is plain. Mr Wordsworth has let the cat out of the

bag[1]. It is not to maintain the standard of education that this thing was done, but this was done to control the University from the Secretariat, to do what was attempted, unsuccessfully, by Sir Provash Chunder Mitter during his ministry in 1922-23. Mr Oaten has said that there is no such thing as official vote, but surely when 80 or 90 per cent of the members are nominated by the Government, practically every vote is an official vote. But I ask the House to consider whether it is possible for a man, whose pay and prospects depend upon the wishes and goodwill of the Secretary in charge of the department or of the Director of Public Instruction, to defy any suggestion made by the Secretary to vote in a particular way? I was not going to refer to these matters, but since Mr Oaten has chosen to refer to them I thought it fit to defend the University with which I have identified myself for many years. Sir, according to the constitution of the Universities, the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor have the power to manage and superintend the affairs and concerns of the University. There is, therefore, no reason why the Director of Public Instruction and the Secretary in charge of the department of education should consider it necessary to have an official bloc in the Senate.

Sir Provash Chunder Mitter had referred to co-operation in this Council. Sir, I find that there are three groups of members on the opposite benches whom we might characterize as Latitudinarians, Attitudinarians and Platitudinarians. The members of the Government bloc belong to the first group. They enjoy immense latitude and power which autocracy gives them. This is indicated by the fact that they play fast and loose with the liberties of the people of the country. And what about the finances of this country? They manage them in a way that their own interests are safeguarded. If co-operation means "all for each, and each for all", if this means working together for mutual aid and help, then, I say, is any co-operation possible between the *bhokta* and *vojyas,* between the master and his slaves?

The next group is that of the Attitudinarians. They are very amiable people. They sit there watching the movements of the Government

[1] W. C. Wordsworth (Presidency and Burdwan ; European) in his speech warned the Government against 'the private massing of opinion—the attempt to make of all Government servants in the Senate one voice', and told the Council that he 'was sounded privately if I was prepared to join this private association'.

benches; they bend their will at every nod of their masters; their attitude is one of purposeful subjection, they appear in different roles according to the needs of the hour or to the bidding of their overlords; their fulsome flattery and unabashed sycophancy are a disgrace to the community to which they belong. They are the veritable Jaychands and Oomichands of modern political life. What is the use of trying to co-operate with them? You never know what they mean to do or how they will change at the next hour.

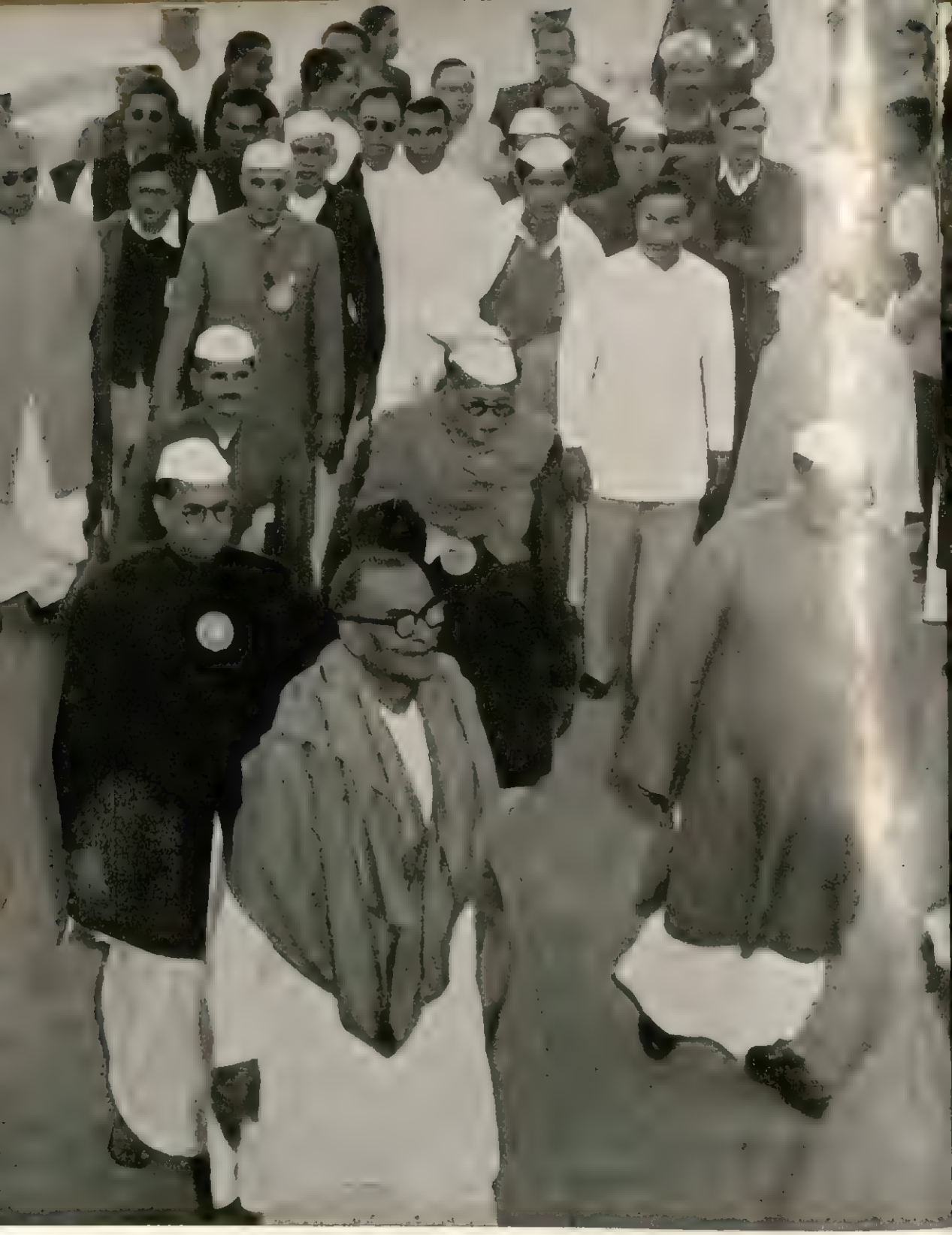
Then I come to the next group, the Platitudinarians. They always indulge in platitudes and are always prepared to utter platitudes in seasons and out of seasons. They say what they do not mean, they mean what they never say; they are anxious to give advice at every opportunity and to every party, but only to themselves they repeat the formula: "Do as I tell you, but don't do as I do." What is the good of trying to co-operate with these people? They suffer from the sins of Inferiority Complex; they can never rise to an occasion and take the consequences of anyone following their advice.

I shall end up my little speech by making one statement. If Sir Provash Chunder Mitter, although not a Minister, but a power behind the throne, is prepared to bring in a Bill which will give to the University full autonomy, financial and academic, leaving to the teachers the final decision in all academic questions, as is indicated in the University Commission's report, if he and his collaborators are prepared to give us a constitution on which different interests are represented and not a mongrel constitution such as he and his friends had proposed, then the members on this side of the House will be prepared to give all their co-operation and support.

23 March 1927

At the Calcutta session of the Congress, 1928

l to R Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, General Secretary, Reception Committee ; Motilal Nehru, President of the session ; J. M. Sen Gupta, Chairman, Reception Committee ; Mrs Annie Besant, President, Calcutta session, 1917 ; Srinivasa Iyengar, President, Gauhati session, 1926



Kalyani session of the Congress, 1954
On the way to the pandal

At the Kalyani session of the Congress, 1954

l to R Morarji Desai, Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, Jawaharlal Nehru, Nabakrushna Chaudhuri

Overleaf : At the flag-hoisting ceremony on the occasion of A.I.C.C. meeting in Calcutta, 1956


CHICAGO

Opposition to the Proposal for a Salaried Vice-Chancellor

CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY has not applied for a paid Vice-Chancellor. Moreover, may I refer my friend the Hon'ble Nawab Saheb[1] to a motion which was moved in the Calcutta University Senate on 29 June 1920, when it was considering the University Commission's Report? Dr Brajendranath Seal moved that the resolution, adopted by the Senate in Committee, regarding the recommendations of the Committee appointed to deal with the Report of the Calcutta University Commission, be confirmed. The first recommendation was that the Vice-Chancellor should not be a salaried whole-time officer, and this was passed without a division and without any opposition in the Senate. Therefore, the Calcutta University Senate in the year 1920, when the labours and recommendations of the University Commission were fresh before the minds of the members, stood against the idea that there should be a salaried whole-time officer. If my Hon'ble friend will look into the big files in his own department, he will probably find that two and a half years ago a similar proposal was put forward by the Government before the Calcutta University Syndicate, but it was again negatived by the Syndicate. And why was it? My friend the Nawab Saheb has cited the instances of several Universities where there are paid

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Speech in support of Saralkumar Datta's motion to refuse a demand for a grant towards the salary of the Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University. Since the creation of the University, the post of the Vice Chancellor had been an honorary one, and the provision for a salary for the Vice-Chancellor, made now for the first time, was considered by many as a further step towards officialization of the University. The provision for a salary for the Vice-Chancellor, under the present constitution of the University, was opposed, among others, by a nominated member, a European member, and some other members not ordinarily voting with the Swarajya Party to which the mover belonged, Sir Abd-ur-Rahim for example; and the motion for its refusal was agreed to by the House.

[1] Nawab Musharruf Hossain, Minister in charge of Education.

Vice-Chancellors, and has also referred to the machinery of Calcutta University, the work of which requires to be carried out. I am afraid, Sir, the Hon'ble Minister does not at all understand the machinery of Calcutta University. Until 1912, this University was mainly an examining body and thereafter it began gradually to take up certain duties of teaching. In the year 1917, the Post-Graduate Department came into existence. In those years—years of transition so far as the activities of Calcutta University are concerned—a great deal of work was required of the Vice-Chancellor. I see before me, Sir, Sir Deva Prosad Sarbadhikari, the hoary gentleman, who was in those years guiding the destinies of this University. I also remember how often we met and discussed the organization of the Post-Graduate Department, and how, for this, he and other members of the Senate put their shoulders to the wheel. Since that day, the organization of this University has greatly changed. It has now a department which is concerned mainly with the examination of students and this is controlled by a highly paid officer, the Controller of Examinations. It has another department which is concerned with the teaching of the Post-Graduate students. The Post-Graduate Department is under the control of an Executive Committee and an Executive Council, and is presided over by two Presidents—one for the Science and the other for the Arts faculties. For the last two years Sir Nilratan Sarkar has been President of both Science and Arts faculties. He, as everybody knows, is a very busy physician, yet he found time to organize the work of these two faculties in the beginning. He is still the President of the Post-Graduate Council in Science, and Professor Radhakrishnan, in addition to his duties as Professor of the University, is presiding over the Post-Graduate Council in Arts. We may be told later on that these gentlemen should also be paid because we cannot expect a man to devote his whole attention to his duties unless he is paid. I know that the Hon'ble Minister is a businessman and as such he understands pounds, shillings and pence. But I may tell him that in Calcutta University we have never regarded pounds, shillings, and pence as the sole *sine qua non* on which a person's attention should be directed before he can give his best to the work of this University. He has mentioned the cases of several Universities where the Vice-Chancellors are paid. I have already

said that he does not understand the machinery of this University, and therefore he has made this statement without caution. He has mentioned the case of Allahabad University. Allahabad University is a unitary, teaching and a residential University.

THE HON'BLE NAWAB MUSHARRUF HOSSAIN: What about Madras?

DR BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY: I am coming to it presently. Madras University has gone a little further than Calcutta University. In Madras there are 14 constituent colleges within the University area, Calcutta University has no constituent colleges.

(A VOICE: He does not understand what is meant by "constituent college").

DR BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY: I do not know whether it is necessary for me to tell the members of this Council that, when that portion of the Calcutta University Commission's Report which deals with the colleges is given effect to, the constituent colleges will be divided from the affiliated ones. It was never the intention of the Commission to allow any college ultimately to remain outside the University. Every college should be part and parcel of the University and that is the meaning of a constituent college, and if there are constituent colleges, naturally they will require the attention of an officer who has got to devote to them all his time and energy; and when the conditions proposed by the Sadler Commission are enforced, let the Hon'ble Nawab come back with his proposal. He has mentioned Lucknow University. That University is designed to be a unitary and residential one. He has also mentioned Dacca University which, as everybody knows, is a teaching and residential University. Perhaps the Hon'ble Nawab does not know what he is asking for. He said, "You have the machinery and you must carry on the work." What is the proper work of the Vice-Chancellor at the present day? Calcutta University works through different departments. As I have already said, the Post-Graduate Department is under the control of two Presidents; the Examination Department is controlled by a very highly paid officer, the Controller of Examinations, who, with the assistance of the principals of colleges and headmasters of schools, conduct the examinations every year. Then there is the Registrar's Department which has got its own rules and regulations, under which it has been working for the last fifty or sixty years. And, more than that, the

functions of the various departments have at the present moment been reduced to such an extent that cases which come up before them are disposed of, more or less, as a routine measure. The Vice-Chancellor's primary duty at present is to co-ordinate the working of the different departments of the University, make sure that they work in co-operation, and to settle such points of difference as may arise in the course of their working. May I also mention the fact that the University under the present system has become smaller in its area owing to the establishment of Rangoon and Patna Universities, and so the work of the Vice-Chancellor has lessened. It is an open secret that the Secondary Board of Education is on the legislative anvil, and as soon as that comes into being the work of the University relating to schools and probably also to the Intermediate studies will be removed from the influence of the University. If that is going to happen, what is the necessity, at the present moment, to ask for a salary for the Vice-Chancellor?

There is another point to which I must refer. Being in charge of the finances of Calcutta University[1] I know what great difficulty I had in scrapping together a rupee here and a rupee there to meet the ordinary expenses, to have a provident fund and give compassionate allowance to the family of those who have served the University well and faithfully for a large number of years and who die in harness. Every time we have got to find out ways and means to give a little relief. At the same time, the present Vice-Chancellor[2] is not anxious to have a salary even if a salary was provided for the post. While we are in such financial difficulties, while we are giving effect to an arrangement arrived at by the Government for a transition period of five years which ends in 1930, I do not see any reason why the question of payment of Rs. 30,000 to a particular individual of the University has come up when the other important portions of the University are being starved and that too, I say, deliberately. Therefore, Sir, it is my duty at this stage to inform the members of this Council that before they vote they should clearly realize that this is a proposal which Calcutta University has not recommended. Calcutta University never wanted that the Vice-Chancellor should be a salaried officer. When the

[1] President, Board of Accounts.
[2] Professor Jadunath Sarkar.

establishment of constituent colleges is decided upon, when there are different colleges which are to be remodelled, this proposal may come before the University, and that will be the time for the Government to make this proposal.

Lastly, on behalf of this University, I have got to refer to this point that, while the question of the salary of the Vice-Chancellor is put before the Council, the Senate was never asked to give its opinion on the subject. This I consider to be a cruel infringement on the freedom of the University, for which we, under the guidance of the late Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, fought and will fight to the last. I ask if it is a proposal which the Government think is a very urgent one, why on earth did they not take the University into confidence? Probably the Government dared not, in view of the definite stand taken by the Senate, in their resolution of 1920, against the proposal of paying a salary to the Vice-Chancellor. With these words I strongly oppose the motion for the provision of a salary for the Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University.

22 March 1928

Inadequacy of Grants to Calcutta University

I TRIED to listen as carefully as I could to the very rambling speech made by my friend, the Hon'ble Minister.[1] I appealed to you, Sir, the other day, just before you left, to provide us with a copy of the Hon'ble Minister's speech, but evidently you were then *functus officio* and therefore what he said I had to know from other people. I was told that he said, "If you keep me in office and let me work this Department, I promise you a millennium." He referred to the secondary, the primary, and the military education, and to Dacca and Calcutta Universities and said, "If you keep me in office then

I will give you health,
I will give you wealth,
I will give you gold galore,
I will give you heaven, when you die,
What could I give you more?"

Today also he referred to such subjects as grants to Dacca and Calcutta Universities. But I would ask him one question, if he is prepared to give a reply. Will he try and find out since when the attitude of the Government of India as well as of the Government of Bengal has changed regarding grants to Calcutta University? If he is prepared to bear with me, I shall show that this change in their attitude towards this University occurred when it received the princely gifts of Sir Taraknath Palit and Sir Rashbehari Ghosh, one of the conditions of which was that the professors to be appointed on them should be Indians.

Speech on a motion, moved by Khan Bahadur Maulvi Azizul Haque, for a token cut to the demand for grants to Calcutta University. The object of the motion was to draw the attention of the House to the inadequacy of the grant, compared to that made to Dacca University.

[1] Nawab Musharruf Hossain, Minister in charge of Education.

Sir, Calcutta University has now arrangements for post-graduate teaching as was required of it under the Act of 1904. The person who gave the first impetus to the establishment of this post-graduate teaching was none other than Lord Hardinge himself when he was the Governor General. In 1912, he announced the contribution of Rs. 65,000 a year. But since 1913, when these bequests were made, the attitude of the Government has changed. Usually, whenever any institution gets a contribution from an outsider, the Government, to keep it going, contribute to the same extent. But in the case of Calcutta University, if I am not mistaken, gifts to the amount of fifty to sixty lakhs have been made by private benefactors, but the Government, in spite of repeated requests, have made no capital grants in recent years, except that on two occasions they gave it some money to meet the deficit that occurred on the revenue account. I say again that, if the Minister, instead of promising us as much of the primary education as we want and more of the secondary education than we require, would only enquire what the present attitude of the Government towards Calcutta University is due to and rectify it, he will do a better service to the cause of higher education in this province.

I would also mention that one of the conditions, on which these bequests were made and which Calcutta University accepted as also did the Government by giving their sanction to those bequests, one of the conditions was that the professors and teachers to be appointed under those Trusts should be provided with laboratories, equipments, etc. Calcutta University is required to provide for these but it does not have the money. As I said the other day, I am entrusted with the task of finding money for these purposes,[1] but I am hard-pressed and do not know how to meet these demands. I say, deliberately, that the Government, by turning a deaf ear to the repeated requests, have allowed these departments to be starved. If I mistake not, requests were made, on four different occasions, to provide grants for the Science College, to which both Sir Rashbehari Ghosh and Sir Taraknath Palit have left munificent bequests. There has been no response to these requests. I see no good

[1] as President, Board of Accounts.

trying. May I give a humble advice to the Hon'ble Minister? If he really wishes to do good to Calcutta University, it is no good his trying to justify the grants to Dacca University because no one complains of them—let Dacca University get as much as it gets or even more, but let Calcutta University also get what it deserves and what it needs. Calcutta University has certain agreements with the Government, which will lapse in 1930. I do not, as I said last year, for a moment admit the justification of the conditions of the agreements which were imposed upon us by the Government during the discussion of 1926, but, since we are under certain agreements with the Government, I for one am not at this stage prepared, on behalf of the University, to make any direct approach to the Government. However, as the question of the inadequacy of support to Calcutta University has been raised, I say, deliberately, that it is because this University had taken a definite step towards—if I may use the term—Indianization of the services under its control, that the Government of India and the Government of Bengal have changed their attitude towards it. I am not at the moment accusing either the present Minister or the previous ones because I do not believe the Ministers have any control at all over the policy of their Department. They cannot help the same policy guiding the Education Department as it has been doing since 1913, and the poor contribution which Calcutta University gets today is due to the fact that this Department finds it difficult to condone the practices of this University to confine the appointment of professors and lecturers under these trust funds to Indians only.

26 March 1928

Dacca University and Powers of the Academic Council

SIR, when I rise to speak on this Bill I do so with the full sense of the responsibility that attaches to one who has been a teacher in Calcutta University for about the last 25 years and who has worked among students every day of this period. What Mr A. F. Rahman has said deserves the greatest respect, because I know that whenever he speaks on any matter he does so sincerely and with full conviction, and, secondly, because he has until recently been a teacher of Dacca University.

In his opening speech, the Hon'ble Minister for Education has quoted Lucknow University and Mr Rahman has quoted Nagpore University. I wonder if the Hon'ble Minister for Education thought it necessary to look into the Lucknow University Act. If he did so, he would find that on page 11, section 20, it is stated that "no action shall be taken by the Executive Council in respect of the appointment of, and fees paid to, the examiners or the number, qualifications or emoluments of teachers, otherwise than after consideration of the recommendation of the Academic Council". If he went a little further, he would find it stated, in section 30, page 15, that the Executive Council is empowered to promulgate ordinances, provided that "no ordinance shall be made affecting the number, qualifications, and emoluments of teachers of the university, unless a draft of the same has been proposed by the Academic Council". The initiative is distinctly laid on the Academic Council for proposing the number, qualifications, and emoluments of teachers, and the Executive Council cannot fix the number of appointments unless it has been first proposed by the Academic Council. That is so far as the powers of the Executive Council are concerned. If he enquired into the constitution of the Executive Council of Lucknow University, he would find that the

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Speech on The Dacca University (Amendment) Bill, 1928.

Academic Council, qua Academic Council, has two representatives on the Executive Council, whereas in the case of Dacca University there is no provision for any representation of the Academic Council on the Executive Council. I find that the Hon'ble Nawab is putting his tongue out, because he thinks that I am perhaps misdirecting the Council. Those who form the Executive Council of Dacca University are: the Commissioner of the Dacca Division, the Deans of the Faculties, the Provosts of the Muslim and Jagannath Halls, two non-Muhammadan members, two Muhammadan members of the Court, four persons, two of whom shall be teachers, appointed by the Chancellor. My proposition is that the Academic Council has no representation on the Executive Council and I hope that the Hon'ble Nawab will agree with me on that point.

Mr Rahman has quoted the case of Nagpore University. Regarding that University, it is said that the Executive Council may "at its discretion institute such professorships, or lecturerships as may be proposed by the Academic Council". Then, on page 19, section 29, it is stated that ordinances shall be made by the Executive Council, provided that no ordinance shall be made affecting the number, qualifications and emoluments of the teachers of the University, unless a draft of the same has been proposed by the Academic Council. Therefore, Sir, from the Acts governing the two Universities that have been quoted in this Council, viz., Lucknow and Nagpore Universities, the intention of the framers of these Acts is clearly seen; both in Lucknow and Nagpore the initiative of making a proposal affecting the number, qualifications, and emoluments of teachers lies with the Academic Councils. In Nagpore also the constitution says that the Executive Council shall consist, amongst others, of one member elected by the Academic Council from its own body. Therefore, here also the Academic Council has a direct representation on the Executive Council. If you consult any of the Indian University calendars—I have done so and I can say with confidence—you will see that in every one of them, wherever the method of having Executive Council has been adopted, the Academic Council has a direct representation on the Executive Council, barring Dacca University. It has been suggested that if this power is not given to the Academic Council, there may be a deadlock. In Calcutta University we are accustomed to a procedure

whereby such proposals first come from the Board of Higher Studies and from the Executive Council in charge of the post-graduate departments, and these are subsequently considered by the Syndicate and confirmed by the Senate. I do not say that every nomination or selection made by the post-graduate departments meets with the approval of every member of the Senate. I do not say that vested interests do not ever vitiate the clear vision and judgement of the Senate. But what I do say is that if on one or two occasions some members of the Academic Council have failed to rise to the occasion, that does not justify Dacca University's discarding this principle which has been accepted by other universities. This certainly is not a sufficient reason for making the change that has been proposed. I would impress this again on the House that the proposed change would take off the initiative from the Academic Council. The final authority must rest with the body which controls the finances, the Executive Council, but I do say as a teacher that it would be a bad day if the power of initiative is taken away from the Academic Council. Sir, the Academic Council under the Dacca University Act is given the responsibility of seeing that the control, the regulations and the maintenance of the standard of instruction, education, and examinations of the University are maintained at a high level. I wonder how the Academic Council can be expected to maintain the standard of instruction and education, unless it is given a free hand in recommending the essential number of professors and teachers, and the proper emoluments to attract the proper class of men. It is only when they have been given this power of recommending that the Academic Council can perform the functions it has been entrusted with by the Act.

Sir, as far as I know, the opinion of the Academic Council is against this change. On the 10th August, 1925, the Academic Council resolved that no action need be taken with reference to the recommendation of the Court to the Executive Council. This recommendation of the Executive Council was made at its meeting held on the 14th of December, 1925, and this Council concurred in the recommendation of the Court and resolved to curtail the powers of the Academic Council. The proposal of the Executive Council was never informally communicated to the Academic Council, nor were it officially informed of the resolution at any

time. If that is so, I say that the authorities of the University, who have recommended to the Hon'ble Minister these changes, have violated the fundamental principle of the Act. On page 47 of the Dacca University Act, it is stated that the Executive Council shall not propose the draft of any statute affecting the status, powers or constitution of any authority of the University until such authority has been given an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon the proposal. Any opinion so expressed shall be in writing and shall be considered by the Court. But, when it is proposed to change the very words of the Act, I ask the Hon'ble Minister to answer my specific question: Was this proposal of the Executive Council, made on the 14th of December, 1925, ever placed before the Academic Council, and, if so, what was the written decision or opinion of the Academic Council?

Sir, Mr Abul Kasem dealt with this question in his usual way. He said that the Academic Council had been inimical to Dacca University. When Sir Abd-ur-Rahim was the Member in charge of the Department of Education two years ago, Dacca University received a statutory grant from this Council of Rs. 5 lakhs recurring and another Rs. 5 lakhs non-recurring.

SIR ABD-UR-RAHIM: The grant was made in spite of your oppsition.

DR BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY: My friend says that in spite of our opposition this grant was given. May I humbly inform him that there was no opposition, as will be proved from the records of the Council? One of the reasons why there was no opposition was the fact that Sir Abd-ur-Rahim made a very conciliatory speech, in which he, as Member in charge, said that he would consider the case of Calcutta University. We are told that if we allow the Academic Council to have this power of initiative, they will abuse that power. Sir, we have got one power and that is of electing the President of this Council. We have also got the power of fixing what his remuneration should be. Supposing in one case we decided not to vote Rs. 3,000 as the salary of the President, am I to be told that we should be deprived of our rights because we do not know how to fix the emoluments of the President? In the case of the President the election depends upon the vote of the House, although the final decision rests with His Excellency the Governor. Therefore, the Council should not

be deprived of its powers simply because in one instance they have failed to do what the Governor expected them to do.

I plead in the name of freedom of Dacca University; I plead also because Dacca University is a neighbour of Calcutta University. What happens today there is likely to be imposed upon us in Calcutta University tomorrow. Therefore, I say, let there be no interference with the power of initiative that is now vested in the Academic Council. If you wish that the Academic Council should abide by and carry out the responsibilities vested in it by the Act itself, give them this power to enable them to do so. If, as has been mentioned by Mr Rahman, the constitution of the Academic Council is not properly laid down and if it is a fact that the junior teachers are not represented in the Academic Council, let my friend Nawab Bahadur bring in a motion for amending the constitution of the Academic Council and we shall support him. Once he has created the Academic Council and once he has given to them a statutory responsibility under the Act, pray do not interfere with that quantum of power which they should enjoy if they are to carry on smoothly the work of teaching in the University.

9 August 1928

On the Demand for Medical Grants

My Hon'ble friend, Babu Bijay Krishna Bose, in moving his motion said that it was in a tone of despair that he did it. Obviously his object was to criticize the method of the department generally and not to criticize or ask for reduction or refusal of any particular grant under a particular head. I rise to speak on the subject in a tone of despondency. We have been charged repeatedly why, when we have taken a policy of refusing a grant in *toto,* do we not take each item individually on their merits and refuse, according to the opinion of the Council, each individually? My answer to that is that, if we had even the power of transferring an amount of a particular head to another head, I personally would have been satisfied with that. But under the present Act, we are prevented from doing so. Therefore, the only alternative for us is to raise a loud cry so that not only the Government and the members may hear it but also those in England in whose hands lies our destiny. The other day His Excellency in his speech in the Council stated that, if the grants under the transferred departments are refused, education, medical relief, agriculture and industries will be starved and serious injuries will be inflicted not on the Government, which would remain unaffected, but on the people whose interests we are here to represent. He went on to say that his Government would not be embarrassed by such a situation which was not of their creation and from which they would in no way suffer while it lasted. Sir, that accounts for the tone of despondency which I have to express tonight. Are we to understand that the Members of the Government want to make

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Speech on Bijay Krishna Bose's motion that the demand for Rs. 47,18,000 under the head 'Medical' in the Budget for 1924-25 be reduced by Rupee one.

Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy had given notice of four motions in connection with the Medical Budget, refusing the demands for house rent and other allowances available in hospitals, dispensaries, medical schools and colleges. These were called but not moved. He however dealt with the question of allowances in this speech.

a distinction between them on the one hand and the people on the other? Is it not one of the responsibilities of the Government to arrange for their subjects the teaching of medical science and also to render them medical help? If so, why is then this distinction being made by the Head of the Executive when he says, "We would in no way suffer while it lasted"—let the people suffer? That is the reason why a spirit of despondency has overtaken us all.

Coming to the medical subject, I find, as one of my friends has already suggested, that the amount allocated this year, Rs. 58,00,000 including voted and non-voted items, is larger than what was voted in 1920-21, namely Rs. 38,00,000. But if we look closely into the figures, what do we find? The medical establishment alone will cost Rs. 9,88,000 in 1924-25 as against Rs. 6,97,000 in 1921-22. Then, what are the figures with reference to hospitals and dispensaries? It was Rs. 19,28,000 in 1920-21 as against Rs. 22,38,000 in the ensuing year. The grant for medical purposes was Rs. 2,30,000 in 1920-21, whereas it is Rs. 1,42,000 for the ensuing year. The only item, besides medical establishment, which shows substantial increase is under the head 'lunatic asylum', where, instead of Rs. 3,43,000, a grant of Rs. 9,87,000 has been made. This is for providing accommodation for those who happen to be His Majesty's guests in the asylum.

Now, Sir, what is the result of this increase in the pay and allowance of the members of the Medical Service? Let us see how they are being paid. I have before me a Civil List for the first of January 1924, and what do we find there? Here is a medical man whose grade pay is Rs. 1,100 but his allowances come up to Rs. 1,300 as follows: Acting allowance, Rs. 250; local allowance, Rs. 200; duty allowance, Rs. 500; and there are some other allowances. Sir, if you have got to pay allowance to a man to do his duty I wonder what he is getting his grade pay for? If this state of things goes on, I do not doubt that we shall have to go on increasing our contributions towards the upkeep of this costly service. I speak with all the confidence that I possess, having been connected with medical education and medical relief for the last 20 years, and I say that so long as we go on giving such allowances we cannot possibly bring a proper balance sheet before us with regard to income and expenditure. The result is that we have got to levy fees for hospital treatment, and this is an unfortunate

practice which the Government had to adopt. I would not enter into discussion at the present moment as to whether the levying of fees from out-door or indoor patients is justifiable or not, but what I do say is that the maintenance of such costly service entails a larger sum and that it affects medical relief, sanitary improvement, etc. The only reason which might be given for maintaining this costly establishment is that it is maintained for the purpose of training students and also for the purpose of affording medical relief to patients. Sir, before 1916, it was the usual plea that the Indian Medical Service people are the only people who could teach students in medicine and that it was a necessary evil. But since then we have had a college, with which I have the honour to be associated for the last five years—I mean the Carmichael Medical College—and there are at least 40 medical men attached to the staff of the College serving their motherland and their people without any pay. If this can be made possible within two or three miles from the Calcutta Medical College, there is no justification whatever for the Government to pay Rs. 9,00,000 for the purposes of teaching students in medicine. It may be suggested that these men are under a covenant and that therefore we must keep them somewhere. This is a matter which, if I were to discuss it I would be told, is a question for the Secretary of State, and not for us, to decide. But at the same time we must put forward our objection in the strongest possible terms as regards the maintenance of this Service. Sir, during the war, out of 28 Civil Surgeoncies in Bengal 17 were held by members of the professional medical service and not one word has been said about their inability to do their work which the I.M.S. men were doing and have been doing since. Only 11 I.M.S. men were on duty in different districts at that time. I ask again what justification can there be for spending Rs. 1,500 on one of these I.M.S. officers when we can get the same work done by paying much less to local Indian officers. The result has been, as those who have read the report of the Public Services Commission know, that the Members of the Indian Medical Service, when they find that the practice which they used to command in former years is dwindling away, want more allowance and more pay to compensate them for the loss. Not only that; they also want special allowances for their wives and children, for their daughters until they are married and for their sons

until they attain the age of 21. If you go on in this way you will not be able to balance your income with your expenditure.

Another reason put forward for maintaining I.M.S. men in the districts is that the European officers in the districts like to be treated by Europeans. Sir, I have my own opinion about this. I have practised here long enough and I have practised in England in different towns, and I know for certain that when it is a question of medical treatment and one of life and death, the average European is shrewd enough not to be guided by his prejudice. As a matter of fact, one of the late Secretaries of the European Association sent for me one day to treat him. The first question I asked him, why had he sent for me when there were so many European doctors in Calcutta, and his reply was, "My life is more precious than my convictions."

Grants to Medical Colleges, Sir, form some of the items in the budget. I will deal with the question of the grant that is made to the Carmichael College. I had a talk with one of the former Surgeon-Generals about this. I told him that the grant of Rs. 50,000 a year which was given to this College was too little for the number of patients that were being treated and the number of students that were being taught. I maintain that one of the fundamental responsibilities of the Government is and should always be to arrange for medical treatment of their subjects and provide teaching in medicine. While you are spending Rs. 9,00,000 for the Medical College on about 600 patients, you are spending only Rs. 50,000 for just half the number of patients and yet this is considered to be too large and I am not supposed to ask for any more. I am mentioning this not with a view to melting the heart of Mr G. S. Dutt[1] or the Hon'ble the Minister in charge but to show the injustice that is being done every day under the shibboleth of higher and greater utility of the service. The reason why I put forward this question before the House is that I maintain that every Government have got certain legal liabilities and that their moral liabilities are even greater than their legal ones. Legal liabilities can be decided and adjusted in a court of law but no lawyer can help the parties to obtain justice when moral liabilities are concerned.

28 March 1924

[1] Then Secretary, Government of Bengal, Local Self-Government.

Pollution of the River Hooghly

I BEG to move that this Council recommends to the Government that a committee consisting of the following members of the Council be formed to work in collaboration with two experts, viz., Major Stewart, the Director of Public Health, Bengal, and Sir Nilratan Sarkar, for the purpose of ascertaining the cause of pollution of the River Hooghly, and to recommend measures, legislative or otherwise, to prevent pollution in future:

Babu Surendra Nath Ray; Dr Pramathanath Banerjea; Babu Khagendra Nath Ganguly; Babu Boroda Prosad Dey; Maulvi Wahed Hossain; Rai Harendranath Chaudhuri; Mr. A. C. Banerjee; and the Mover.

The question that I have the honour to bring before the House could be discussed from two points of view. As a matter of fact, the records show that in the previous meetings of the Council, before the Reforms Act, in the years 1918 and 1919, two resolutions were brought before this House by the Hon'ble Rai Mahendra Chandra Mitra Bahadur, in one of which he took up the question from the sanitary standpoint and in the other from the religious. It is obvious that both these standpoints have to be considered in a question of this character, but for the present moment I shall confine myself to the sanitary aspect of the matter. It is a painful experience for a person who has got to go about the different parts of Calcutta to see the effect on the people of drinking what I might call the polluted water of the River Hooghly. This city which was at one time the metropolis of India is suffering, year after year and more and more, from these effects. And I shall bring forth evidence to show that what I have said is correct. The history of the inquiry into the cause and effect of the pollution of the River Hooghly dates back to the year 1904, when a special committee was appointed, particularly to investigate the allegation that with the increase in the number of jute mills on either side of the Hooghly more and more septic tank installations

and latrines were being erected, and the effluents from these tanks led to the pollution of the river. The committee made its report in December of the same year. Land treatment of the sewage and land filtration treatment of the effluents were not considered feasible by this committee and an expert from England was requisitioned by the Bengal Government; and Dr Fowler was sent by the Royal Commission on Sewage Disposal. This Dr Fowler and Captain Clemesha, the then Sanitary Commissioner of Bengal, who assisted the former in making the inquiry, submitted a report which I have before me now. I will quote a few sentences from this report. Captain Clemesha, who investigated the bacteriological aspect of the problem, says: "I consider that there is no doubt whatever that there is a zone of pollution down the banks of the Hooghly, varying from 30 to 100 yards wide and varying in intensity according to the amount of the sewage put into the river and the dilution it has undergone."

He goes on to say: "It has been maintained by some people that the volume of water in the Hooghly is so huge that the small quantity of sewage that is put in by the towns on its banks cannot be recognized nor does it pollute the river sufficiently to impair health. We have a sample of water taken in a strong current a good way from the bank, a long way from any single mill outfall, with every condition favourable for rapid dilution and yet considerable contamination can be demonstrated." The water for Calcutta is taken at Pulta which is several miles from the nearest mill and a contamination in the immediate neighbourhood does not occur, yet the water at Pulta was found to be greatly contaminated.

"Now of all the pollutions", says Captain Clemesha, "that rivers are subject to, by far the most serious is the addition of sewage, specially in a country like India where unfiltered river, water taken very near the edge, is the drinking water of thousands." I may incidentally mention, as is probably known by most of the Indian members here, that there are still a large number of devout Hindus who will not drink any water except that taken from the river itself. They will not use the ordinary tap water. "There can be no manner of doubt", says Captain Clemesha, "that the admission of comparatively small quantities of septic tank effluent will increase the number of pathogenic germs present and as such will be a menace to health. Septic tank effluents of the very best quality in this

country will give positive reaction for coli in a dilution of 1 in 10,000 and for sporogenes 1 in 1,000." Captain Clemesha continues: "It is not to be supposed that the whole of the faecal pollution along the banks of the river is due to the mills as the people living along the banks themselves are to blame to a considerable extent, but it must be remembered that 15,000 gallons of septic tank effluent (from one mill) contains the faecal contamination of 4,000 people, working in the mill."

This report inquired into, and made suggestions for, the use of special forms of filter contact beds, with the details of which I need not trouble the House, because they are of a too technical nature. Suggestions have been made regarding the use of the effluent for boilers or as flush water for latrines, thereby minimizing the amount of discharge finally into the river. The question of discharging the effluent into midstream has also been inquired into and discussed.

This admirable report also discussed various other methods of disposal of the effluent, for instance, by intermittent filtration over land or by broad irrigation, as has been carried out in other countries. Suggestions were also made for the establishment of a laboratory to test samples from latrine-tanks and give advice. That was in 1906. The question is what has been done from that day till today and what is the result? In accordance with the Fowler Report, a Public Health Laboratory was established and a highly paid officer was kept in charge. An Inspector of Nuisance, or whatever name be given to him, was also appointed to look into these septic tank latrines; some additions were made to the Factory Rules. From the wording of these rules it is clear that the effluent from septic tank latrine installations shall not be discharged into any river unless it is free from faecal contamination or unless it has been sterilized by the addition of 5 grains of chlorinated lime to one gallon of effluent. So far as we can gather from the evidence of outside witnesses as well as the evidence of the Director of Public Health, the septic tank effluents as discharged into Hooghly today are very badly contaminated. In the year 1922-23, the Calcutta Corporation had its own analyst sent over to examine the effluents from the different septic tank latrines; he also examined, bacteriologically and chemically, the river water both from the bank of the river and the midstream. The Corporation's analyst found the water from the midstream

more contaminated than what Dr Fowler had found it to be in 1906, but it was purer than the water from the bathing *ghats* or from the various *khals* into which the effluent was allowed to flow. In this connection it would be interesting to note that this gentleman further tested the water from the Khurda *khal,* the Titagarh *khal* and also from Ichapur *khal,* and found that the water of the Khurda and Tittagarh *khals,* into which the effluent from the septic tank latrines was allowed to run, was highly contaminated but the water of the Ichapur *khal,* which receives no effluent from any tank, was decidedly superior. The report of the analyst of the Corporation in the year 1923 was worse than the report of August, 1922. I have got both reports in my hand now. Another examination was made by him in the middle of 1923 which gave similar results.

The committee I propose will take steps to get an outside analyst to examine the septic tank effluents in addition to such examinations as are being held by the Pulbic Health Department. My reason for suggesting this is that in the year 1923, when, as I have said, the Corporation analyst examined the septic tank effluents he found that 33 per cent of the effluents contained faecal contamination to the extent of 1 million bacilli per c.c., whereas the Public Health report says that the total number of effluents found contaminated amounted to 10 per cent of the total number examined. Therefore, there is a certain amount of variation in the two statements made by the two departments.

Even if the water is not used for drinking purposes, infection may occur from washing utensils and bathing in water so contaminated ; an epidemic of cholera broke out in Constantinople caused by such practices. When this matter was brought to the notice of the Health authorities in the year 1842, the Law Commissioners in England reported that an outfall should be constructed to remove the sewage of cities where it could be disposed of without polluting the streams. This recommendation fell on deaf ears, as probably it might fall on deaf ears here today. The sewers which were built long ago discharged into the river ; so the Public Health Act was passed in 1848 but it had little effect. The Nuisance Removal Act of 1858 was then passed at the close of a severe epidemic that was raging at that time. A Commission appointed in 1865 gave certain indications in their report as to how the latrines ought to be constructed, sewage of the city

removed, etc., and although powers were given to a central body to compel the local authorities to construct and maintain sewers, nothing could be done till 1872, when another Act was passed which facilitated the combination of local authorities for joint sewerage works and divided the country into urban and rural sanitary districts. Finally in 1875 all these Acts were replaced by the Public Health Act which is the present general law for sewage disposal in England and Wales. This Act of 1875 was reinforced by the River Pollution Prevention Act of 1876 and 1893, making it an offence for any person to discharge or permit to be discharged into any stream any solid or liquid sewage matter. The Local Government Act of 1888 specially authorized the County Councils to enforce the River Pollution Prevention Act of 1876 and the extremely offensive conditions in certain river basins were met by Acts forming local boards to deal summarily with these problems.

Therefore, the proposal that I am putting forward before the Council today is not merely to inquire whether there is pollution of the River Hooghly but also to find out the extent of this pollution, to find out whether the new rules under the Factories Act are being enforced and carried out as they should be. It is also to find out whether the other suggestions of the Fowler Committee have been carried out and if not who are responsible for it. It is not only on the destructive side, if I may put it that way, of the inquiry that I am stressing, but I am also asking the Council to give support to this proposal because the committee will have to suggest, where discharge from any septic tank installations into the river is found to be unavoidable, whether the effluent from the latrines could be made to run into the river in such a way as not to contaminate the water-supply or whether there is any other method by which the effluent can be disposed of ; for instance, whether the effluent, after proper treatment, cannot be diverted into tanks to flush out the latrines so that it should not get into the river at all. But I would go further and it is a broader question: whether the effluent cannot from certain installations be suitably treated and used for irrigation. Further, the question has been raised, not only in the Calcutta Corporation but also among the public, as to the danger of silting up of the Bidyadhari. I have seen records of what this river was like 40 or 50 years ago, when it extended up to Kanchrapara. The difference in the

height between the ebb and flow tides at Kanchrapara used to be 8 feet, which indicates that at that time it was a live river.

It used to draw the water of the Salt Lake area and of low lands roundabout it. Is there any possibility of diverting the effluent of these septic tank latrines and also of the municipal drains into a canal, or drains artificially created, so that all the water may run into the Bidyadhari and keep it alive? That is the problem which must be tackled by the committee. It is a well-known fact—I will here not refer to the cause of it—that owing to the silting up of the Bidyadhari, the places which I have the honour to represent in this Council, such as Halisahar and other municipalities in that area, and which were healthy 50 years ago, are now practically depopulated on account of malaria. It is very necessary to think out constructive ways of developing these areas along with methods of removing the pollution from the river as well as to find an outlet for the effluent of these latrines. Although for my present purposes I have referred to the septic tank installations only, one cannot overlook the fact that in the near future Calcutta is going to develop and it will very likely develop more towards the north than towards the south. When the development takes place these municipalities will have a huge problem before them in finding an outlet for the disposal of their sewage. As a matter of fact two of the municipalities —Titagarh and Naihati—are at the moment discussing the matter of the disposal of their sewage. Therefore, this problem has to be approached from a broader standpoint, keeping in view the future necessities of these municipalities which will almost certainly develop and expand. Finally, it may be within the province of this committee to say whether it is necessary to introduce in Bengal a River Pollution Act similar to those prevailing in England and in America. In that case, some local bodies or local boards may have to be created whose function would be to see that the effluents which run into the river are kept as sterile as possible. With these words, Sir, I beg to put my motion before the House for its acceptance.

9 December 1925

The motion was agreed to, with some more names added to the committee, after an unsuccessful attempt on the part of the Minister in charge to persuade Dr Roy, who had given notice of this Resolution on more than one occasion and was at last able to secure its discussion by the Council, to withdraw his Resolution pending submission of a report on the subject, then in preparation.

In Support of Prohibition

I HAVE listened very carefully to the statement made by the Hon'ble Minister[1] regarding the excise policy of the Government. I have also made a cutting of the speech which appeared in the papers, and there I find a sentence in which he, as a popular Minister, seeks to put forward the policy of the Government, apart from what has been put forward in a resolution which appeared in the issue of the *Calcutta Gazette* of the 2nd December, 1926. The Hon'ble Minister said: "If we were convinced that prohibition was the right policy I would assure the House that the Government would definitely work towards it."

Mr [F. E.] James has just asked where is the constructive policy with regard to excise, emanating from any party of the House? I might say at once that the only policy which we look forward to being laid down by the Government is that it is committed to a definite policy of prohibition to be given effect to gradually, but the first steps have to be taken from now.

I find, Sir, that there is one item mentioned in the resolution which says that the number of licences granted have been going down. I would challenge this statement. I took some pains to find out the number of licences granted from the year 1917 to the year 1925-26, as they appeared in the different issues of the Administration Report of the Excise Department of Bengal. I find that the number of licences granted for country spirit in the year 1917 was 1,100: in the year 1925-26 it was 948. As regards imported liquors, the number of licences granted in the year 1917 was 569: in the year 1925-26 it was 1,623. As regards the *ganja* licenses the number granted in the year 1917 was 1,367: in the year 1918 it was 1,265 ; in the year 1925-26 it was 1,215. As regards opium, the total number

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Speech on Maulvi Asimuddin Ahmed's motion seeking to refuse a budget demand and criticizing the excise policy of the Government.

[1] Byomkes Chakravarti.

of licences granted in 1917-18 was 820; and in the year 1925-26 it was 861.

Sir, I have quoted sufficient figures to show that the statement in the resolution quoted above is not quite correct. But I shall perhaps be told that although the number of opium licences granted in 1925-26 is more than those granted nearly ten years ago, yet the amount of consumption of intoxicating substances has been less. Is that so? I admit that so far as opium is concerned, the amount of consumption is less. But what about the consumption of liquor? It is true that the amount of country liquors consumed in the year 1917-18 was 700,000 gallons; in the year 1925-26 it was 632,000 gallons. As regards foreign liquors, particularly beer, the amount consumed in 1917-18 was 505,000 gallons; in the year 1925-26 it was 831,000 gallons. Therefore, it is not true to say that the total consumption of liquors and intoxicating drugs, during the last ten years, has gone down.

If you have a larger number of shops, do you not induce people to go in for drink and other intoxicating drugs? If that is not so, I do not know why large advertisements are displayed in big shops, such as Whiteaway's and Hall & Anderson's. We know that, although supply sometimes follows demand, if you put the supplies in front of people, demand also follows supplies. These advertisements, therefore, show that efforts are being made to increase, and not decrease, the consumption of liquors.

There is a second statement in the resolution and that is this: "... total prohibition involves an unjustifiable interference with the liberty of individuals ..." I take the liberty in this connection to quote certain conclusions and resolutions arrived at by the people in different parts of the country.

The Indian National Congress, which met at Belgaum, in December 1924, under the presidency of Mr Gandhi, said: "The Congress is of opinion that the policy of the Government of India in using the drink and drug habits of the people as a source of revenue is detrimental to the moral welfare of the people of India, and would, therefore, welcome its abolition."

The National Social Conference, meeting at the same time and place as the Congress, with Sir C. Sankaran Nair as Chairman, passed a resolution urging both the Central and the Provincial Governments to declare their intention of adopting total prohibition as early as possible. In

January 1925, the South India Social Conference resolved: "That this Conference is of opinion that the present excise policy of the Government has been a failure, and that it ought to be radically changed, and a policy calculated to lead to total prohibition within a period of ten years be adopted and given effect to at once."

Not only the social and political conferences, but the members of the United Provinces Legislative Council in March last passed a resolution in these words: "This Council recommends to the Government to accept and to declare that total abstinence is the aim and object of its excise policy, and to consider favourably the proposals of the Excise Conference with a view to achieving that end."

Similar proposals have been made in the Council of the Central Provinces. In Madras also a strong group in the Legislative Council brought on a debate in which the excise policy of the Ministers was brought under discussion, and it will be remembered that only three days ago it was announced that the Minister in charge of Excise in the Madras Presidency declared that the goal of the Government with regard to excise was total prohibition. Lastly comes the resolution of Haji Wajihuddin in the Legislative Assembly in September 1925. The Assembly has passed this resolution by a vote of 69 to 39, recommending to the Governor General in Council that "legislation be undertaken to prohibit the import, manufacture and use of all sorts of liquors in India, and that in the meantime he be pleased to direct the Local Administrations under his control and convey the opinion of the Assembly to all other Provincial Governments that they should take steps forthwith to grant to local bodies within their jurisdiction the right to determine the number and location of shops within their respective areas."

Therefore, Sir, although there is the statement of the Government that total prohibition will involve in an unjustifiable interference with the liberty of the individual, the opinions of individuals, as expressed in different conferences and legislatures, are unanimous in asking the Government to lay down prohibition as the goal. Sir, these demands for prohibition do not emanate merely from politicians or from social reformers; religious conferences of various communities—Christians, Muhammadans and Hindus—have always regarded prohibition as their

ultimate goal and they have also asked the Government to adopt it as its policy.

A large revenue is derived from the sale of liquor, opium and other intoxicating drugs, and this the Government is reluctant to lose. The amount of revenue derived from this source in Bengal is about Rs. 2½ crores, but if the Members of the Government would consider for a moment they will see that the consumers of liquors and drugs must be paying at least three times the revenue. The province, therefore, is poorer at least by Rs. 7½ crores, and a good proportion of this sum is spent by the poorer cultivating class and the mill-workers. This shows that this revenue is derived by taxing the poorest amongst us. Therefore, even if the Excise Department is abolished in the next few years and even if the Government puts forward the policy of total prohibition as its goal, I do not see much difficulty in making good the loss in revenue by enhancing some of the existing taxes in certain respects or by imposing new ones, such as would preferably not fall on the poor section of the people. I will go further and say that if it is found that the excise revenue is essential today in order to meet the expenditure—I am told in the communique of the Government, by the way, that the price of the different drugs having been increased in order to lower consumption, the income has increased correspondingly during the last ten years—if it is difficult to manage without this revenue today, it will certainly be more difficult to manage without this revenue hereafter. This is a problem which will have to be faced either today or tomorrow. Even if the people have to be taxed to make good the loss of revenue from excise duty, there should be no hesitation in imposing prohibition, for it should be realized that it is, ultimately and entirely, for the good of the people that they would be taxed.

From all I have said, Sir, my answer to Mr James is this: that it is not necessary to put down any constructive excise policy for the Government except this that the Government should commit itself today to a policy of total prohibition—to come about not in a day but within a particular period of time—and try to find out a source to meet the issue. When I say this I am not merely putting a theoretical proposition before the Government. When the question of excise duty on cotton was discussed in the Assembly, the Members of the Government did not say, "Go and

find out the money that we lose on this from some other source", and when the question of steel industry came up and bounties were to be given, they were not asked to find out the extra revenue that would be lost to the Government. Therefore it is for the Government to make good the loss whether by retrenchment or some other means. What I would ask—and what the country wants—is that the Government should declare that the policy of total prohibition is their goal. As this department is now under the control of the so-called popular Minister we expect that the Government will not lose time to declare their policy of prohibition.

22 March 1927

On Grant to Public Health Establishment

My Hon'ble friend[1] has complained that, while we are trying the game of throwing out Ministers, we are neglecting to co-operate with him for the purpose of bringing about a better state of things so far as public health and medical relief are concerned.[2]

There is a good adage in Hindi, *rope pehr bābul kā, ām kāhānse hoe*, which means if you plant a shrub you cannot have mangoes growing out of it. It is impossible to do anything under the present system, though my Hon'ble friend, the Minister, may think otherwise. Why do I say so? I will give him two examples, one from the neighbouring province of Assam and the other from this very province, and these will show how hard it is to work under the present system. There was an epidemic of kala-azar in one of the villages in Goalpara district in Assam. The Deputy Sanitary Commissioner was sent there to make investigations. He sent an urgent wire to the Minister in charge of that Department, and another to the Sanitary Commissioner of the Province. I might say that Assam employs 19 Sub-Assistant Surgeons for the purpose of doing this kind of work. The telegram to the Sanitary Commissioner was forwarded by him for enquiry to the Inspector General of Civil Hospitals, who in his turn sent it to the Secretary in charge of that Department. The Secretary then sent it to the Commissioner of the Division and the Commissioner passed it

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Speech on the motion tabled by Akhilchandra Datta for a token cut of Rupee one to the demand under the head Public Health Establishment.

[1] Sir Pravash Chunder Mitter, Minister in charge of Local Self-Government (Public Health).

[2] Earlier in the day, Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy had asked, "Why and how far Bengal has lagged behind in giving effect to the recommendations of the Lee Commission, as compared with other provinces, e.g. Madras, Bombay, Allahabad, etc., and whether it is a fact that while in those provinces high posts, such as the Principal of the Medical College, have been given to Indians, and that while practically all the posts that were recommended by the Lee Commission to be given to the indigenous members of the services have been given to them, it has not been so in Bengal." The Minister in charge, in reply, made the observation under reference.

on to the Deputy Commissioner in charge of the district. The Deputy Commissioner sent it to the Civil Surgeon for enquiry and report. He made a report which travelled back through the same route, ultimately to the Secretary of the Department and then to the Minister. The result was that the orders regarding what to do about the epidemic reached the place where it occurred 18 months after it had taken place!

The other case relates to Birbhum district. There was a grant of Rs. 16,000 for anti-cholera operations in Bengal about 2½ years ago. The Director of Health applied for Rs. 5,000 out of the grant when an epidemic broke out in Birbhum. Three months after the application was made, the reply came that the money could be had! It was by then too late to do anything with the grant and the Director of Public Health replied that the money was no more necessary. The Finance Department became richer by Rs. 5,000.

My point is this: The present system will not do. The late Finance Member, Hon'ble Sir James Donald, once declared that the Government had adopted Mr C. R. Das's policy in regard to this matter.[1] I deny that. The most fundamental character of that policy was that the whole of the public health work should be made over to a Board of Trustees in which the people should be well represented; and that this Board should have statutory powers to carry on the public health work and should be responsible to see that no part of the province remains without a public health organization. At present we have got the District Boards with their own District Health Officers. I am told that the money which has been reserved for public health under C. R. Das's scheme is being administered through the District Board. That is exactly what we are complaining of. The constitution of the District Boards at the present time is not such that it will be possible for them to do anything systematic in regard to public health work. There are no provisions in the Act which would bring in men with special knowledge of sanitary engineering and health work as members of the District Boards. There is again the control of the Director of Public Health and the Surgeon-General in these matters. I saw somewhere a note drafted by one of the Directors of Health regarding a

[1] See Appendix.

particular matter—I think it was the case of preventing smoke nuisance in Calcutta. He says that there are 19 different individuals who have a say in the matter—the Health Officer of the Corporation, the Health Officer of the Port of Calcutta, the Inspector of Smoke Nuisances, etc. Therefore, our complaint is that, however much the Minister may desire, the present system is unworkable. It is impossible for any Minister to do the work and it is impossible for us to co-operate unless we know where we are. If you have a Public Health Board controlled by the people you will really be giving something in which people can work with confidence and which will do good to the people at large.

The policy of the Department of Health has gone through various metamorphoses during the last 100 years. The Hon'ble Maharaja Bahadur of Nadia once said that he had not been to England, so he did not know how the Public Health Department was being run there. The Hon'ble Minister has been to England and if he goes there next year I will ask him to find out how it is being run there. Up to 1870, the position was exactly the same as here, but after the passing of the Public Health Act in 1875, a statutory body has been created which is responsible for carrying particular schemes into action. The entire responsibility was made over to this body for carrying out a definite policy in regard to public health work there. It is not possible for the present Hon'ble Minister to lay down a policy here. He is only to carry out the present policy. He cannot create a new policy within the course of a year. Even if he is left in charge of the Department for the next 10 years, he will not be able to create a new policy. And that is because he has no personal knowledge of the Department and also because he has no power to control those who have, in the past, laid down the present policy in a particular line. If he wishes to do any good, I will ask him to look into the fundamental feature in Mr Das's policy and to create a statutory body which would be charged with the duty of carrying out public health work throughout the province. If you would keep Rs. 12 lakhs for this purpose to be spent by that body you will save the lives of a great number of people in this province. The duty of carrying out this task will not depend on a particular Minister but upon a statutory body.

May I, Sir, be allowed to explain a point I tried to make before. The

Khan Bahadur[1] has entirely misunderstood my position. I have never said that the District Boards, which now have to perform different functions, should be divested of their control over the public health staff. I simply said that at the present moment, for the purpose of laying down a policy, e.g., to obtain statistics regarding incidence of diseases and to find out the best method of combating malaria—a particular statutory body should be created to lay down certain fundamental rules for the District Boards to follow. My friend has said that expert knowledge is not necessary for the prevention of malaria. By saying this he has demonstrated, to the hilt, the correctness of my arguments that District Boards, as at present constituted, should not be left to deal with public health work. At present, we know little about malaria, from the public health point of view. We know nothing of its incidence, nothing about the mode of spread, and so we do not know how to combat successfully the disease either here or elsewhere. Therefore, at the present moment, our policy is merely a tentative one. My point was that a statutory body should be created to find out what the policy of the Public Health Department should be and to lay down certain fundamental rules for the guidance of the District Boards.

26 March 1928

[1] Khan Bahadur Moulvi Azizul Haque.

Self-Government in Medical Profession

MANY strange things are happening in this Council and we have just now found a Member of the Government introducing a Bill and then, after wasting our time, dropping it suddenly because he was defeated on one point.[1] In this particular instance, we find a non-medical man introducing a Medical Bill. Now let us see who were the gentlemen who were on the Select Committee which recommended that the Bill be passed. There is Mr Moberly: he is not a medical man; next, Sir Provas Chunder Mitter, an expert in Revenue matters, but not a medical man; next, Mr Drummond, certainly not a medical man; then Khan Bahadur Azizul Haque, Maulvi Abul Kasem, Mr A. F. Rahman and Raja Bahadur Bhupendra Narayan Sinha—none of them are medical men. I have only omitted the name of the Surgeon-General who alone is a medical man. So it is no wonder that this proposal should come from a Committee of this character.

With regard to the history of the introduction of the Bengal Medical Act in this province, I may, for the information of this House, dilate on certain points omitted by Dr Kumud Sankar Ray. After the Act was put on the Statute Book, the Government found it necessary to start by a resolution what they call the State Medical Faculty. This resolution is dated the 11th August, 1914, and it is a very precious document. It contains several statutes, of which the one I find most important is Statute 7; and this has been modified at the suggestion

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A speech on Dr Kumud Sankar Ray's motion seeking to amend the Bengal Medical (Amendment) Bill, 1928, so as to ensure the democratization of the Bengal Council of Medical Registration, the provision of an elected President and a better representation of medical practitioners. Most of the amendments were adopted by the Council, though the amendment requiring that the President should be elected fell through as the result of a tie.

[1] The reference is to the motion that the Bengal Village Self Government (Amendment) Bill, 1928, as settled in Council, be passed, which the member-in-charge declined to move after the Council had adopted an amendment that took away certain powers of control proposed in the bill to give to the Commissioner and the District Magistrate.

and under the orders of my friend Sir Provas Chunder Mitter, issued when he was the Minister in charge. This document contains practically the gist of the views of the Government with regard to the origin of the promulgation of the Bengal Medical Act and the origin of the State Medical Faculty. Section 3 of the resolution runs thus: "The Bengal Medical Act, which was passed last April, has conferred upon the Bengal Council of Medical Registration the duty of general supervision over the interests of the medical profession, and the progress of medical education, and it rests with that body to decide whether the training and equipment of a school or college are up to the standard. It is undesirable that the function of this Council, which is largely elective, should be trenched up by any other body; it is the first step towards self-government in the profession"—it is a very significant expression—"and the responsibility of the State Medical Faculty will, therefore, be confined to arranging for the examination of students of colleges and schools which have been approved of by the Council of Medical Registration." That is the origin of the State Medical Faculty. The members of this Council will be surprised to hear that, in the course of 14 years, self-government in the profession has led the Government to alter Statute 7, by which the State Medical Faculty has usurped certain functions, namely, that of the supervision, directly or indirectly, of the standard of teaching given in the different schools which send up students to the State Medical Faculty for examination; that is to say, it is trenching not only upon the rights and privileges of the Bengal Council of Medical Registration, but upon the promises and declarations made by the Government itself on the 11th August, 1914. Now, I should like to draw the attention of the members of this House to the advancement in the profession, if any, made from the first step. In fact, you will find that it is still at the first step. We look up with awe at the different orders of the Government which are like small stars in the horizon. When shall we get our self-government in the profession? The Bill proposes to give six seats to the medical profession in a body of twenty-one, when they have by the Act of 1914 six seats in the Council of fifteen. I will read out the sentence which details the duties cast upon the Bengal Council of Medical Registration. They are the "general supervision over the interests of the medical profession and the progress of medical

education", and I doubt not that the Government in 1914 thought that the six members would supervise the interests of the medical profession, leaving the other nine to look after the development and progress of medical education. Today we are told that six out of a body of twenty-one is the second step towards the development of "self-government in the profession". That is my first point.

My second point is this: It is perfectly true that in this Bill it has been proposed to give to the institutions, that would teach and send out students for examinations to be conducted by the State Medical Faculty, a certain representation on the Bengal Medical Council. But if you take the total number of members who would represent the official view, and the members who would not represent the official view or rather who would represent the non-official view—it has been calculated by a member of the Indian Medical Service, the Editor of the *Indian Medical Gazette*—you will find 10 would be officials and probably 11 would be non-officials. But it is quietly overlooked that in the near future, as mentioned by Dr Kumud Sankar Ray, there are going to be established four new Government medical schools. Therefore, the total strength of the Council is likely to be 25 or 26, and not 21. The registered medical graduates would still have six representatives out of this number—self-government in the profession indeed—and the Government members, i.e., officials, would be not 10 as against 11, but 14 as against 11. That is, indeed, the second step towards self-government in the profession!

My third proposition is the question of the appointment of the Chairman, viz., how the Chairman is to be appointed, whether he should be elected or nominated by the Government. It has been dinned into our ears that whenever there is a body which is charged with the duty of spending some Government money, the Government ought always to have a control over that body. This Bengal Council of Medical Registration, as far as I am aware, gets a small contribution from the public revenues, but it is representative of a large number of interests of different characters, and is not charged with the duty of spending a large sum of money, in any shape or form. I do not know why under such circumstances it is proposed that an official, nominated by the Local Government, should be the President of the Bengal Medical Council. If he is to be a person to be

nominated by the Local Government, it has been suggested that he should be the Surgeon-General. As Dr Kumud Sankar Ray has mentioned, the Editor of the *Indian Medical Gazette* says that the Surgeon-General is the head of the medical profession so far as the service is concerned, and if he is to have a seat in the Council at all, he must be at the head of it. I may mention, for the information of this House, that the Surgeon-General of the Indian Medical Service is a member of the Medical Faculty of Calcutta University; and as far as I know, it has never been the case that he has been the President of the Medical Faculty of Calcutta. As was expressed very clearly by Sir Hugh Stephenson, in an expert body there is no room for an official. Therefore, this body, representing as it does various interests, should have a person whom they can elect. There is another reason why it should be so. The Surgeon-General is the executive head of a large number of Government medical schools and colleges. The Bill, as amended, proposes to confer on the Council the power to inspect any such medical college or school and report on it before granting it recognition. If the executive head of the schools and colleges is also the head of a body of persons who are going to inspect and to pass judgement on such institutions, I think there is something wrong in the proposition.

Mr Subhas Chandra Bose: Second step towards self-government[1].

Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy: As my friend reminds me, this would be the second, not the second but the fourth, step towards self-government in the profession.

There is one other point to which I should like to draw the attention of members. In the amendments proposed to sections (f), (g) and (h), it has been suggested that of the four members to be elected by registered practitioners who are either graduates in Medicine or Surgery, one must be a teacher. It is perfectly true that the several Calcutta medical colleges and schools have been given each a separate representation. But it is felt that there ought to be persons from among the teachers who would represent not the staff of any institution, but the interests of the general medical practitioners.

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[1] The reference is to the Government resolution, quoted earlier in this speech, which styles the Bengal Medical Act of 1914 as "the first step towards self-government in the profession".

I now come to the next objection to having the Surgeon-General or a nominated member of the Government as the President of the Medical Council of Registration: the Bengal Council of Medical Registration shall have to deal with a large number of cases where the interest of the medical profession as a whole would be considered, and it is necessary that, if judgement is to be passed by the Council, it should be done by a body which should be presided over by a person in whom the medical graduates have confidence. The Surgeon-General may be an expert administrator, but it is not certain that he will always enjoy the confidence of the medical graduates as a whole. This is the position which has got to be considered before the members of the Council agree to the constitution that the President should be a person nominated by the Government.

My last point is that if there is to be any amendment to the Bill, the amendment should be on the lines that no institution, whether Government or private, should be exempt from any inspection or formal recognition as is the case at the present day. It is unfortunate that the present Medical Act contains the schedule in which it is mentioned that any person who has been trained in a Government medical college or school will be recognized *ipso facto*, whereas if it is a private school it has to be formally recognized before it is accepted by the Bengal Council of Medical Registration and by the State Medical Faculty. Therefore, an invidious distinction is sought to be made between these two classes of institutions, and this, I think, is a reason why there should be a non-official majority, or at any rate, a very strong element of non-officials, which will not only look after the interests of the medical profession, but will also ensure that the education is properly conducted.

3 August 1928

The following extract from the speech of Bijay Krishna Basu, supporting Dr Kumud Sankar Ray's amendment, is of interest:

"Sir, the real objection to my mind to the granting of larger powers to the Council of Medical Registration and increasing the numbers of elected members is to be found in a very inspired article which appeared lately in the *Englishman*. I say, Sir, 'inspired article,' because the reading of it at once leaves in one's mind the impression that it has been written by a member of the Indian Medical Service. It is said there that if representa-

tion is given to the medical profession, doctors with powerful lungs and rabid political views will come in.

"I do not know whether the writer had Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy in view when he wrote these lines, because Dr Roy is the only man in the medical profession to my knowledge who has got powerful lungs, but he is certainly not a man of rabid political views. Undoubtedly, we, congressmen, are all considered to hold 'rabid political views' by the bureaucracy. Therefore, he might be referring to him, and perhaps the Government are afraid that if men like Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy comes in the cause of medical education will suffer. I challenge, Sir, anyone to say that any man in Bengal will take that view, excepting the rabid Indian Medical Service people (*Hear, hear*)."

On the Motion for the Removal of the President

WHAT has happened is remarkable. It is an unprecedented occasion that the first elected President of the Bengal Legislative Council is proposed to be removed from his office, because of his conduct on Thursday last. A great deal has been made of the fact that the House is constituted after the pattern of its prototype, the House of Commons, and therefore the dogma or the fact that holds good there, namely, that the dignity of the House is associated with the dignity of the Chair, should also hold good in this House. We may not offend the one without doing harm to the other. But let me assure the members of the House that the resemblance is very superficial. It is true, here as there, that there is a person sitting in the Chair with certain authority given to him by the statute and in whom are vested certain punitive powers. He has to guide and control the activity of the House ; he has to moderate the inevitable and natural passions of a popular assembly. It is true also that in this Assembly, as in any other, the mood of the House is uncertain. There is no barometer to indicate when the storm is going to burst. All of a sudden a hurricane bursts upon the House, out of what seemed a moment ago the most trifling matter and a

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The occasion for the motion for removal of Kumar Shibsekhareswar Roy, President, Bengal Legislative Council, from his office, moved by Birendranath Sasmal was as follows:

A member (Nurul Huq Chaudhuri) had protested (18 February 1926) against a particular ruling of the President characterizing it as arbitrary, and when he did not withdraw the remark, he was ordered by the President to leave the House and to absent himself during the remainder of the day. This was followed by cries of 'Shame, Shame' by Dr Kumud Sankar Ray, who was also similarly ordered. J. M. Sengupta, Leader of the Swarajya Party, protested against this 'childish action' of the President in turning out a member for crying out 'Shame, Shame' which he thought was quite a legitimate act ; and when he refused to withdraw the remark 'childish' he was also ordered out of the House ; two other members, A. C. Banerjee and Dr J. M. Dasgupta, who followed with similar remarks about the President, had also to leave the House.

very tranquil situation. Therefore, the resemblance that there is between this House and the other is that in both places human passion plays a great part.

Beyond this the resemblances stop short. In the House of Commons they work not so much under a written constitution but on such constitution as has evolved out of conventions and precedents of that country. It has been said with truth that there "freedom slowly broadens down from precedent to precedent". Therefore, the rules of procedure of that House that guided them in the past and are still guiding the deliberations of that assembly today are those to which that House have agreed ; and if any powers are given to the President, it is the powers of the House as a whole handed over to the President, on trust, to be used carefully when occasion demands. It may be said that under such circumstances only the dignity of the House and the dignity of the Chair could be regarded as closely associated. But in our case the constitution we work under and the rules framed therefrom are drawn up and manufactured seven thousand miles away by individuals who, however versed they may be in the art of government, have not much in common with the people of this country, and these are sent to us in packets by post for our use. Such are the rules which we are to obey and work under. Sir, let the members of this country think of other countries where they work under a written constitution: France, Germany, America and Australia. In the Assemblies of these countries, fisticuffs and throwing of chairs and agenda papers at one another are not very uncommon episodes. Why is this? Have the members even thought of the difference between the two constitutions? It is because these constitutions do not possess the sanctity of ages ; they are not evolved out of precedents ; and consequently, when passions surge the human breast, they are not awed down in the presence of sacred inheritance of centuries. But, even about England, we read in Graham's *Mother of Parliament*:

"Speakers in the past displayed little of the dignity and none of the fairness to which their successors have now for generations been accustomed. They were frequently subjected to intentional disrespect on the part of the unruly members of the assembly over which it was their duty to preside. In the early journals of the House, for example, we find a speaker complaining that a member had put out his tongue, and popped

his mouth with finger, in scorn. Even as recently as in the reign of George the Third the parliamentary debates were marked by perpetual altercations of an undignified and acrimonious description between the members and the chair."

What then do we look for in a President of a representative Assembly? A Lord Chancellor in the reign of Queen Elizabeth said to the House of Commons, "Go and assemble yourselves together and elect one, a discreet, wise and learned man to be your speaker." Discretion comes first in this. It may as well be the second and the third qualification of the President. It is said that "in the twentieth century as in the sixteenth, the faculty of the highest importance in the art of speakership is circumspection, sagacity, tact, in which is implied an imperturbable temper, a careful observation of the peculiarities of the individual character and a common sense in judgement". I concede at once that the dignity of the Chair must be maintained. But how is it to be maintained? and who disturbed it on Thursday? I read in Graham: "The speaker should ever be ready to quell disturbance with a fair hand, he must yet display an habitual urbanity of manners, calculated to soothe the nerves of an irritable and excitable assembly. When a member uses unparliamentary language, the speaker must summon his persuasive powers to induce the culprit to withdraw the offensive words." On Thursday, Sir, you had given a ruling, and a few minutes after, gave a contrary ruling. The Hon'ble Member rose to a point of order and you read the Standing Order under which you had the power to give the ruling. I do not dispute the fact that you have the power to give such ruling. I do not question at this stage whether the ruling was right or wrong, although I find it has been questioned in some quarters. When the Standing Order was read out, the member said something which I certainly did not hear, nor presumably did you either. You asked the member to repeat what he had said. The Hon'ble Member said, "I have said what I have said. I do not want to repeat it any more." Was not this a sufficient indication that the Hon'ble Member had no intention of repeating it? But, Sir, on another fateful occasion the cock crew thrice. In this case you asked him three times to repeat the expression he had used. Then the game was up. It is said that sometimes a deaf ear is as useful to the President of an Assembly as the blind eye was to Nelson.

No President can control an Asssembly who do not have the self-possession and calm judgement so necessary to assuage the impulses, the temperaments, the unreasoning whims and caprices of an Assembly. In this case, you chose to poke the deadly lion within and then the storm burst. Where was the necessity of rousing the volcano, and if anybody did that deliberately that person was, Sir, nobody but you. And it was, therefore, you who lowered the dignity of the Chair. (*Hear, hear*) The powers vested in you should not really have been used by you on that occasion because you yourself was at the mercy of swaying impulses. "A man who is stung to the quick", says MacDonagh, "by angrily reproving cries is unsuitable for the Chair of the House of Commons." You should have known human nature and studied the temperament of each member. You should have remembered that it was you who, sitting next to me, before your elevation to the Chair, was most vociferous and created the biggest rows which it was the privilege of the Assembly to witness. (*Hear, hear*) Where was your judgement? Where was your discretion? Can it not be said that, having provoked the outburst, you were incompetent and unfit to exercise the powers vested in you. Therefore, I say deliberately that it was you who lowered the dignity of the Chair.

The powers vested in you, you did exercise. The members named withdrew. But the members on this side of the House felt that they should show their disapproval of your conduct. Your salary is not votable, and an ordinary motion for a vote of censure may or may not have a chance of being moved in the lifetime of this Council. A motion of adjournment of the House depended on the will of the Governor and the President. Therefore, the only course open to us then was to move under section 72C (4) of the Government of India Act. Our action was considered hasty even by those who thought the President was wrong. Perhaps, said they, the tabling of this motion might stop negotiations towards a settlement. Let me assure you, the members of this House, that I have tried all means in my power to arrive at a settlement, because I felt that, whether the motion is lost or carried, the estrangement between the President and certain sections of the House will remain. On Friday a settlement was in sight. But the event which happened on Saturday morning frustrated all attempts at a rapproachment. We were told that certain high-

placed members of the Government had insisted that the prestige of the Chair must be maintained. I use the word "prestige", not "dignity", because in India when prestige enters by the front door dignity escapes by the back door. (*Hear, hear*) Yes, the prestige must be maintained. Alas! what mistakes have been committed, what issues sacrificed, under the influence of this beguiling witch.

When I was assured last night that the chances of settlement were frustrated by the invisible hand, I determined that this motion must be discussed before the House so that I might exclaim, "Hands off, Lords, keep off the grass." We, the members of the House, are dealing with our elected President. Pray do not interfere.

If this motion is lost, the result will be due to the Government being able to command a subservient and slavish majority. (*Hear, hear*) In that case, I shall be able to throw open the doors of the House and show to the people the figure of the elected President of the Council as a henchman tied to the Treasury Bench and clothed in a robe of prestige by a benign Government. (*Applause*)

24 February 1926

On Firing on Strikers at Kharagpur

SIR, I beg to move that the business of this Council be adjourned for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, viz., the firing on the Bengal Nagpur Railway employees and strikers at Kharagpur on the 11th of February.

Before I pass on to the subject-matter of this resolution, I may mention that it has been questioned in various quarters whether it was necessary for us to move a motion for adjournment on this question. That it is a question of urgent importance I do not believe any member of this House has any doubt; that it is a definite question I do not believe anyone will object. The question is whether this matter is one of public importance. I doubt not that the Government will be able to put forward a statement, with which they are satisfied, as to what happened on the evening of the 11th February. But we, the members of this Council, apart from voicing the wishes of our own constituencies, have also got the primary duty of looking after the interests of the province as a whole so far as the Executive Government is concerned. Sir, I am a believer in the dictum that if you give a man power he is sure to abuse it unless there is a strong public opinion to check him. If I had the power to take five rupees from the pocket of my neighbour, my animal instincts would probably prompt me to do so. But I know that there are sections in the Penal Code which make it an offence and there are customs and restrictions which prevent me from doing so. Similarly, to prevent the Executive from abusing its power, if we notice that as a result of some reprehensive orders of the

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The motion has reference to a strike among the employees of the Bengal Nagpur Railway at Kharagpur for the redress of certain grievances, e.g., defective housing, dismissal of nearly seventy hands, low pay among certain classes of workers, frequent assaults and racial discrimination. The strike, "a most unequal fight, a fight between the poorest of people and the mightiest of the mighty on the other", was described by Akhilchandra Datta in the course of the debate as "really a part of a bigger fight for the freedom of the country".

Executive authority certain unhappy incidents have happened and if we feel that these were avoidable even under the given circumstances, we, the members of the Council, should then bring that matter before the House for discussion. But, Sir, there is another reason why I bring forward this motion before the House. When this question was discussed in the [Central] Assembly, the Home Member, Sir Alexander Muddiman, as well as the Commerce Member, Sir Charles Innes, are reported to have said that the matter was one for the local Council and that the House would be very ill-advised to pass censure when the facts showed that the authorities were right. That, Sir, is a statement which of course need not surprise us, for it has been given by a Member in charge of Government. Before, however, I pass on to the motion itself I would like to read out one more sentence from the speech of Sir Charles Innes, in which he says, "The versions as received by his officials were quite different from that given by the workers and that they did not tally in all respects. Indeed the House was not in possession of facts." I would have liked, if I were in the Assembly, to ask the Home Member how he could pass judgement on the conduct of an official on a particular evening when the House—perhaps I may say when neither the House nor the Government were in full possession of facts. Sir Charles himself is also reported to have said that at a particular stage the District Magistrate ordered the use not of fire-arms but of bayonets. He said that his task was difficult. Then again he said that "no more violence was used than was necessary". Sir, I fail to understand how, if the House was not in possession of facts, could he form and express this opinion? It is for the purpose of raising a discussion on this matter that I felt it necessary, on behalf of the Congress party, to bring this motion before the House. It has been suggested to me that, instead of asking for an adjournment of the House, it might have been possible to put questions to the Government with regard to the details of the incidents on that day. But, Sir, there is a very obvious objection to that procedure. On many occasions, on my putting questions about such matters to the President or the Secretary in a formal manner, I found that the questions could not be answered before three weeks, by which time the matters ceased to be of urgent importance. There is another reason why that procedure would not satisfy the members of this House nor the public at

large. The reason is that a statement would probably be made without getting its accuracy verified by people on whose judgement we could rely. The statement would probably be the one put up by the District Magistrate himself who in this matter happens to be the accused.

I now pass on to the subject-matter of the motion. Here I have a paper in my hand in which Mr Rao, the General Secretary of the Bengal Nagpur Railway Union, is reported to have stated thus:

"A further attack was made by the Auxiliary Force, and they began to pursue and charge the strikers with bayonets."

MR PRESIDENT: Do you take the responsibility for the statement?

DR BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY: Sir, I am referring to a statement made in the public press. The names of the members of the Auxiliary Force, who were supposed to have indulged in the firing, were given. This appeared in the public press and it has not been contradicted by the Government. The statement refers to shooting and bayoneting.

THE HON'BLE MR A. N. MOBERLY: Sir, I take exception to the discussion as regards the bayoneting. All that the motion relates to is firing. The bayoneting and the firing took place at different times and at different places.

MR PRESIDENT: There cannot be any discussion in regard to bayoneting as that is not within the scope of the motion before us.

DR BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY: I was narrating the facts and had read only one sentence in which the reference to bayoneting appeared. The Hon'ble Member need not be nervous about the word "bayonet".

MR PRESIDENT: But you have not told me yet whether you take the responsibility for the statement.

DR BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY: Sir, it was a report by Mr Rao and it had been published in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. Sir, it is alleged that two members of the Auxiliary Force were recognized as Mr Enward and Mr Gait who shot at the strikers and surely their whereabouts can be known. They pursued the men into the Bazar where they shot a man who was standing near Karim Bux's shop. The man ran up to the shop after receiving the shot and fell down, and was later on carried to the hospital. I am not concerned at present with the method of repression that was used, nor with what orders the District Magistrate had issued to the Auxi-

liary Force. I am merely placing before the members of the House certain incidents which no one has been able to challenge, namely, that there was shooting. I believe that the Government Member will make a statement to show that the shooting was not done by the members of the Auxiliary Force. However, I will not pre-judge that statement. I find the members opposite are smiling. I would ask the members opposite not to treat the matter with levity. While I am addressing the House on this very serious matter, when members of our community are shot down, the gentlemen opposite are laughing and smiling! This very attitude of the members shows the necessity of placing a matter of this kind before the House. It has not been denied that the Auxiliary Force was called out by the orders of the District Magistrate; it is not denied that the members of the Auxiliary Force under Colonel Henderson are also employees; nor has it, I believe, been disputed that the strikers and the officers of the Railway were at variance on particular issues. What these issues are it is not for me to discuss here. But the fact remains that the members of the Auxiliary Force are also the superior fellow employees and that they were called out at the instance of the Magistrate. It is not denied that the report I have just read to you does not tally with the official report. It has also been suggested in order to explain the particular incidents that happened on the evening of the 11th February that stones were thrown upon certain officers or officials of the Railway as a result of which the repression took place. Sir, I have taken the responsibility of moving this motion before the House in order to make two points perfectly clear. Before we, the members of the Council, or the members of the public are satisfied with the statement made by Sir Charles Innes that "no more violence was used than was necessary", we must see that the statement made by the Magistrate is tested by a committee of enquiry consisting not of officials of the Railway or of the Secretariat people but by members who have been affected by the firing on that particular evening or by members whose judgement can be relied upon. It has been suggested, as I have said, that not more violence than was necessary was used, but it has not been denied that violence had been used. The question is whether the District Magistrate was justified, under the circumstances, in calling out the very members of the Auxiliary Force who may have been responsible for creat-

ing the situation and whose attitude towards the workers was resented by the strikers. It is questionable whether the District Magistrate was, under the circumstances, the only proper person to judge the necessity of using violence. Before violence is used on entirely unarmed workers, who are weak and cannot defend themselves, the onus to show that using violence was necessary lie upon the person who used violence. It is not only necessary to satisfy the members of this Council that no more violence than was necessary was used but it is also equally necessary to satisfy those persons who are the victims of that violence that violence was justified - that justice was done and will be done in future so that what has happened may not be repeated in future.

With these words, I put the motion before the House.

22 February 1927

The motion, for which K. C. Roy Chaudhuri, a nominated member representing labour interests, offered congratulations to Dr Roy and "through him to his great party for beginning to realize that no truly national movement in any part of the civilized world could be divorced from the needs of the workers and the peasants", received general support, even from those who did not ordinarily vote with the Swarajya Party. Sir Abd-ur-Rahim for example. The motion however was talked out, as the time-limit had been reached and the debate had automatically terminated. A closure motion, moved earlier, was rejected by 58 votes against 40, and this was claimed as an "emphatic condemnation of the Government regarding the outrages at Kharagpur".

On Communal Electorate

My friend, Mr Fazl-ul Huq, possesses a dual, if not a multiple, personality. It was at his own house, in the course of a conversation, that he told me that he had advised his Moslem friends not to press for a separate electorate and not to ask for reservation of seats, because, he said, if his advice was accepted it would mean that the Muhammadans would come into the Council in a preponderant majority. If I remember aright he gave an instance of his own district, Barisal, where, in spite of the fact that one of the Hindu members of the District Board was a capable person, he could not get the Chairmanship of the Board because the Muhammadans were in a huge majority. Therefore, his moving a motion of this character in this Council must be taken as an indication of the fact that he changes his personality according to the situation and circumstances he finds himself in. A lot of controversial and out-of-the-way materials have been brought into the discussion ; these ought to have been discussed on a higher level than in this Council. Sir Abd-ur-Rahim has put forward two arguments for his advocacy of separate electorates. He said that a separate electorate does not operate against national development. I take it, Sir, that his expression "separate electorate" in connection with the amendment before us means "communal electorate", and it is to this proposition that I wish to address myself in the first instance. His second point was that, as the Congress people were anxious to ask for self-determination, they ought also to allow the Muhammadans to determine for

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This speech refers to an amendment proposed by A. K. Fazl-ul Huq to Sir Abd-ur-Rahim's motion on the future constitutional system of India. Sir Abd-ur-Rahim had proposed, among other things, that in the constitutional instruments of future "(f) appropriate provision be made for the proper and adequate representation of important sections of the population in various legislatures and other statutory self-governing public bodies". A. K. Fazl-ul Huq moved an amendment that to clause (f) the following be added, namely, "by means of a system of separate communal electorate." A. K. Fazl-ul Huq's amendment was negatived.

themselves what form of electorate they should have. It has been put forward as an argument before the members of this Council and it is a fact that out of the 26 districts of Bengal, 18 or 19 have a preponderance of Muhammadan population. It is also a fact that in the districts of Eastern Bengal the Hindu voters are in a minority to a very large extent. (*Cries of 'question, question'*). If my friend, Mr Fazl-ul Huq will kindly read the records, he will see that my statement is absolutely correct. I have gone very carefully into the census figures with regard to the districts and I repeat again that it is a fact; and the Hindu members of the Congress partly feel that in the districts of Eastern Bengal, if no communal representation is given, the Hindu population may be at a disadvantage and yet the Congress maintain that there should be no communal electorate. I have the authority of my friend on my left, Sir Abd-ur-Rahim, to say that they agreed to the reservation of seats in the joint conference merely as a matter of compromise. Why did the Congress not agree to this proposal of communal electorate? A man of Sir Abd-ur-Rahim's intelligence, I feel, should at once see that a community is always a smaller subject than the nation and the moment you make communal interest paramount you reduce your nation as a whole. The larger the number of communities that put forward their own claims separately the weaker the nation becomes.

Therefore, the first question, if I may say so, is the question of arithmetic. If each community were to put forward its own interests as of more importance than those of the nation, the interests of the nation as a whole would suffer. And that is not really all! What would happen next? Not only the nation as a whole would suffer but each separate community in order to maintain its integrity would have to take help from other communities and to come to a compromise with those communities on various questions. If any community has to depend upon, let us say, the Government votes, for a particular matter, to that extent it is a weak spot in that community. If the Hindus of Eastern Bengal have to depend upon Government nomination in order to maintain their integrity in Eastern Bengal, I say the Hindus of Eastern Bengal will lose in strength.

There is another point which we cannot overlook and that is that when we come here as representatives—after all we are considering at the present

moment the question of representation in the Council—we surely do so to reveal the difficulties, the weaknesses and the wants of the people whom we represent. The majority of the people living in villages are afflicted by poverty and bad health, by poor sanitary conditions and lack of educational facilities. Sir, all communities, Muhammadan or Hindu or Christian, are equally subject to these afflictions. Therefore, whenever a question comes up before this Council we have got to consider it in terms of the needs of the people whom we represent, and since the needs of the villagers—for they form the bulk of the population of this province—are not communal, our representation here on a communal basis will harm the cause of nationalism.

The other proposition put forward by Sir Abd-ur-Rahim is the question of self-determination. A person of his sobriety of judgement and intelligence will at once observe that the word "self" in that expression is used with a distinct connotation, because if "self" is taken to apply to a community, what would prevent a person within a community from saying that his party in that community also should have its self-determination? If you proceed like this, the word "self" will finally come to mean an individual and if you want to press this question of self-determination from that point of view, I say no party system can develop and no nation can evolve. When the word "self-determination" was used by our national leaders, I take it, it was used to mean self-determination for the nation as a whole and not for this group or that.

This takes me on to the last point urged by Sir Abd-ur-Rahim on the members of this Council. It is perfectly true that Hindus and Muhammadans should come together for some settlement or other. It is perfectly true that we cannot drown all the Muhammadans in the river Hooghly nor can the Muhammadans convert all the Hindus in the course of the next century. It is perfectly true that our interests are almost identical in the greater part of our social activities, but the question is, where is the scene on which such arrangements and such compromises should be made? Mr Abdul Karim has indicated, more by suggestion than by actual words, that such arrangements, such compromises should always be made outside the Legislature, because we come here with a specific purpose on specific duties; but if there is any arrangement to be made it

should be made in a spirit of give-and-take outside the Legislature. That is a point of view which the Congress has always taken and that was the point of view which led the late Mr C. R. Das to come to an arrangement[1] with the Muhammadans in the year 1923.

My last point is that we cannot consider the question of a separate electorate unless we know what the electorate will be like. Mr Abdul Karim has always suggested that if there was adult suffrage in the province, probably the question would assume a different form and I am inclined to agree with him there. Therefore, the question of details with regard to representation in the legislatures can only come in when we have decided as to the suffrage which we intend to give to the people of this province. Therefore, in spite of the fact that we are hereby charged by both Hindus and Muhammadans with betraying both their communities, in spite of the charge levelled against Congressmen that they do not look to the interests of the Hindus in Eastern Bengal nor to those of Muhammadans in Western Bengal, we still stick to our original proposal that the Legislature is not the place where we can discuss the subject of communal electorates.

1 August 1928

[1] The reference is to the 'Bengal Pact' which provided, among other things, for special weightage in favour of the Muslims till they reached a proportion, in the matter of services, commensurate with their numerical strength, and proposed that one community should refrain from such acts that hurt the feelings of the other community, music before mosques and the killing of cows, for example.

IN THE SERVICE OF
THE CITY OF CALCUTTA

Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy served the Corporation of Calcutta as an Alderman during the periods 1930-33, 1938-39 and 1941-43, and was elected Mayor of Calcutta for 1931-32 and 1932-33. He applied himself with steadfastness to municipal administration, following in the footsteps of his leader, Deshabandhu. During the period of his mayoralty, which coincided with an important phase of the freedom movement in India, the Corporation earned the disapproval of the powers then ruling the country. How the Mayor stood up for the rights of the Corporation may be seen from some of his speeches reproduced in this section, which also includes a Five-Year Plan for improvement of Calcutta, a blue print prepared by him as early as 1932.

An illuminating account of Dr Roy's career in the Corporation of Calcutta, by Sri Santosh Kumar Basu, appears on pp. 374-90.

Ideals of Civic Service

ALDERMEN and Councillors, fellow workers in this Corporation, I thank you for the great honour you have done me and for the kind words you have spoken today.

But may I ask: Do you realize the significance of your action today? Do you appreciate the full import of this unanimous call to me to accept the chair occupied in the past by stalwarts and giants? I do not know what your answer will be, but let me tell you what it all means. I shall start with a confession. In the past I declined the honour of being nominated for this high office until I found that there was unanimity in your choice. It is this unanimity which is my source of strength today. Those who are great, those who are big, may, and often do, stand alone, serving as a beacon light to others, holding up to us ideals to be achieved and leaving foot-prints for us to follow in. The world looks up to them for inspiration and guidance. But for us, workers, unity and organization, co-operation and cohesion are essential for the production of that atmosphere in which alone discipline can grow and work progress. I say,

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Address on being elected the Mayor of Calcutta, 15 April 1931.

Dr Roy's name was proposed by Subhas Chandra Bose, the retiring Mayor, who, in his speech congratulating Dr Roy on his unanimous election, observed:

" . . Though comparatively a newcomer in this House, you have during this short period won the confidence of every section in this Corporation. Calcutta knows you as one of its premier physicians, your connection with several medical institutions in this city has endeared you to the public of Calcutta and your devotion to the cause of learning, as demonstrated by your service to the University of Calcutta, has made your name familiar with the intelligentsia throughout this province. You are today the life and soul of that famous institution, the Chittaranjan Seva Sadan which is a fitting memorial to our late leader and first Mayor, Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das. . Your willingness to court imprisonment at the call of duty has borne testimony to your patriotism and the strength of your character. ." (It will be recalled that while an Alderman of the Corporation of Calcutta, Dr Roy, a member of the Congress Working Committee declared illegal, was arrested in August 1930 at Delhi and sentenced to six months' imprisonment).

therefore, with deliberation and with a full sense of the value of the words, that your responsibilities have now become great.

Do you remember the stirring words uttered on the 16th April, 1924 by that great man whose portrait you see in front of you today, embodying the ideal for successive Mayors? Lest you forget them—and I find that nearly 60 per cent are new members—let me recall the main features of the late Deshabandhu's programme: Free primary education, free medical relief to the poor, purer and cheaper milk and food supply, better supply of filtered and unfiltered water, better sanitation in *bustees* and congested areas, housing of the poor, development of the suburban areas, improved transport facilities, and greater efficiency of administration at a cheaper cost.[1] I will not pause here to test how far we have succeeded in achieving these ideals. I will not quote statistics to satisfy ourselves or to disarm critics. No, that is not my purpose. But you will notice that in 1924 we had only 19 schools with 2,500 pupils, while today we have 225 schools and no less than 22,000 students. My query would be: Are you satisfied? How far are you from the introduction of compulsory primary education in this city? I hear you say: But we spent last year Rs. 75 000 on the improvement of *bustees* as against Rs. 30,000 in 1924. I ask you candidly: Are your hopes with regard to the improvement of *bustees* realized? Again, you will say: We spent Rs. 64,000 on the Ward Health Associations last year as against Rs. 22,000 in 1924, Rs. 6,00,000 in contribution to hospitals against Rs. 3,00,000 in the year 1924. You say: Are we not providing for the relief of the poor sufferers? And, have we not provided for the development of civic and health consciousness amongst the people? The question naturally arises: Although the people may have had somewhat better facilities now for obtaining relief in cases of illness, have we yet made them free from liability to infection? Have the plague-spots been removed? We still see the filthy railway trucks scattering infection and dirt through one of the main thoroughfares of the city. The ratepayers have been provided with 64 million gallons of water a day, as against 34 millions in 1924 with a promise of better supply of unfiltered and filtered water in the near future; and yet in these hot days we hear the

[1] See Appendix for the full text of Deshabandhu's address.

As Mayor of Calcutta

In his Library
While an Alderman of Calcutta Corporation, 1938

cry, 'Water, Water'. Why should this be so? Why should this discontent continue? Not because we are today no nearer the ideal laid down in 1924, but for some other reasons, I believe. It is my conviction that in any organic institution, composed of men and not of things, of living and growing individuals and not of inanimate objects, the ideals also grow. If the ideals of a living institution fail to grow, it is a sign of ill health. If we have life in us, the more we approach the goal, the further it recedes from us. Leave it to the hard-headed financiers and statisticians of the future to apportion praise or blame regarding our achievements during the last seven years. I am anxious, however, today to point out to you that the outlines on the canvas are there, we have got to fill in the details ; the broad features of the scheme are there, we have got to frame and work out a programme ; the power, the prestige, the men and the money are there, let us utilize them with a set purpose and let us work in unison to bring about the uplift of the poor and the relief of the sufferer. Let us ensure for the *Daridra-nārayana*, as much as for the rich and the prosperous, those civic amenities which are their due. Let our service to them be guided by a pure heart and an honest effort. In this programme you will be the Mechanic and I the Instrument. So yours will be the duty of translating into actuality the ideals set forth before us. If you fail I fail, but God willing, with your help, we shall succeed in going forward and forward.

15 April 1931

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ALDERMEN and Councillors, I thank you most sincerely for the renewed confidence you have placed in me. But who am I? I am merely a camp-follower of that great man, Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das, who had adorned this Chair which I have now the honour to occupy for the second time. His portrait is standing before you today. He was the man who first laid down the tradition of this office. He was the man who set up an ideal for us to follow.

I have been told today, at least one or two members have said, that I have no faults. I shudder at the idea. I would be glad to hear that I have at least one fault, the fault of interfering with the work of others. I am

glad that I have that fault. I have been told that it was a matter for surprise that I should have taken upon myself the responsibilities, I do not say the dignity, of this office, even after the experience of the past year. The strength that kept me up during the past year, the strength that I enjoy today, is the strength that you give me and the strength which, I believe, is the source of all strength, namely, work—work for its own sake so that it may bring its own reward.

I entertain no delusion that I have been able to satisfy every section of the House. I know my imperfections. I am after all a human being and I am glad that I am only so. I know of at least one weakness in me and that is madness for work. Call it madness if you like, call it weakness if you like, call it interference if you like, but so long as I remain a disciple of that great man who set up the tradition of this office and who laid down his life in the service of the country, I have to continue working. And in this Corporation, with the experience of the last year, I find that there is a great deal yet to be done. There is, however, no denying the fact that we have developed the city a great deal during the ten years that the New Corporation came into being but much more remains to be done. There is no denying the fact that we have served the ratepayers better or more every year but much more yet remains to be done. But without your help it is impossible for me or any one to carry on any work in this Corporation in the interest of the ratepayers. You will be my source of strength for the purpose of carrying out such improvements in the city life of Calcutta as will redound to the credit of the party to which I have the honour to belong.

During the next year of my office I hope to face many problems. Whether you like it or not, whether it is a part of my function or not, I refuse to occupy this Chair merely as an ornamental figure-head, but, as I said before, if I have to try to do my best for the ratepayers of this city it will be only with your co-operation and advice.

I have been given many counsels this evening. Many suggestions have been given to me regarding the improvements that are to be made in the different departments of the Corporation. This is not the time for a

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Address on being elected the Mayor of Calcutta for the second term, 11 April 1932.

detailed discussion of these suggestions. But I will humbly pray to the Giver of all strength to give me strength to go through the next year of ordeal, to be able to satisfy the needs of the ratepayers a little better and to maintain the tradition of this office as well as to perform the duties that have been cast upon us as best as we can.

I thank you again for the confidence that you, as the representatives of the ratepayers, have placed in me, and I hope that when the time for laying down my office comes I shall hear from you, as I said in my last speech, that I have tried to do my best for you and for the ratepayers.

11 April 1932

Rights of the Corporation

A GREAT responsibility rests upon us in a corporate capacity in dealing with inquiries made by the Executive Government. For this purpose I do not care whether the Government is, as it is now, an alien, irreplaceable, bureaucratic body not responsible or responsive to popular will, or whether it is a Swaraj Government of the future. Nor do I pause to consider whether it is this group, the Congress group, or any other group which may be controlling the Corporation at a particular moment. We have to take a long view of things and safeguard the rights of the Corporation as a corporate institution.

If a future Swaraj Government becomes too inquisitive, too anxious to satisfy their curiosity—I put it mildly at that—too eager to employ the Corporation to do what is Government's job, shall we accept that position? Let us look into this matter from this standpoint: the Legislature has given to the Executive Government a certain amount of control on the Corporation. They are indicated in Sections 14 to 19 of the Act. Section 17 says

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During the political upheaval in India, in the early thirties, Calcutta Corporation was looked upon with disfavour and suspicion by the Government, for its leaders were also the country's leaders in its march to freedom. Early in the career of the new Corporation, Subhas Chandra Bose, its first Chief Executive Officer, was clapped in detention; so was J. M. Sen Gupta, five times Mayor of Calcutta; and Alderman Bidhan Chandra courted imprisonment in 1930 as a member of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress. Other office-bearers and workers of the Corporation were also suspected of complicity in political movement of the times; and Sir Charles Tegart, the redoubtable Police Commissioner, publicly observed, later in the year, that "the Corporation provided terrorists and their relatives with jobs largely in the capacity of teachers", an allegation stoutly rebutted by Mayor Bidhan Chandra Roy.

In this atmosphere of distrust and suspicion, the Government of Bengal addressed three letters to the Corporation of Calcutta, one of which referred to the working of the Primary Education Department and asked for 'a full and complete report' on the following among other points:

". . (iv) instances, if any, of teachers taking part in the civil disobedience movement subsequent to their appointment; (v) details of disciplinary action, if any, taken by the

that if on receipt of any document furnished under Section 15, the Local Government are of opinion that any of the duties imposed by or under this Act has not been performed or has been performed in imperfect or inefficient manner, the Local Government may, by written order, direct the Corporation, within a certain period of time, to make arrangements to their satisfaction for the proper performance of their duties, etc.

Section 18 provides that, if the Corporation do not duly perform those duties, the Government can appoint any person to do them and pay him out of the Corporation fund.

Therefore, when the Government asks for information under Section 15, it must be for the purpose of operation under Section 17 or 18. Suppose, for argument's sake, the Legislature intended to give the Government powers under section 15 to obtain information other than those intended for the operation of Section 17 or 18 and the Corporation refused it, what could the Local Government do? No provision under this Act, as it stands today, provides for this contingency. The Legislature and the Legislature alone can alter the Act. In this instance the Legislature has limited the effective control of the Executive Government to Sections 17 and 18.

We do not derive any powers from the Executive Government as has been suggested by Mr Luke. We have to act under the provisions of the Calcutta Municipal Act. Let me point out to you that the Government are entitled only to such information as appertains to any duties cast upon the Corporation by or under this Act.

Corporation against leaders found to be actively participating in any such movement; (vi) names of teachers, if any, who have been convicted and sentenced in connection with the civil disobedience movement or any other political offence; instances, if any, with details of teachers, convicted and sentenced to imprisonment, being allowed to draw pay for the period of their detention; (vii) instances, if any, of students of Corporation Primary Schools taking, or being led to take, part in political demonstrations, e.g., demonstrations in furtherance of or in sympathy with the civil disobedience movement; disciplinary action, if any, taken against such students; (viii) instances, if any, of Corporation schools being closed on the occasion of any such political demonstration; (ix) instances, if any, of the Corporation school buildings being lent for use for purposes of such political propaganda or demonstration; (x) whether the Corporation have taken any effective steps to prevent students and teachers from taking active part in political propaganda or in any form of civil disobediences in future . . ."

The Corporation discussed the letter for two days at a special meeting, and the Mayor, in winding up the debate, made the statement reproduced here.

Therefore, the question arises, do the queries contained in these letters refer to duties which have been imposed on us by the Act? Are we required, for instance, to take "any effective steps to prevent students and teachers from taking any active part in any political propaganda or in any form of civil disobedience in future?" If so, then the questions regarding them are relevant, if not, we would be justified in not giving any answer. We shall be within our rights to refuse to allow the Executive Government more powers than they possess under the Act. We shall not satisfy any idle curiousity of the Executive Government.

After all, the position of the Corporation, in regard to the administration of the Education Department under it, is the same as that of any other teaching institution or university. Have the Government asked any university or teaching institution to act in a similar way, or have they asked questions whether they have acted in that way? Are the Government in possession of facts to prove that civil disobedience among the students and teachers of the Corporation schools is more rampant than among the students and teachers of Government and public schools and colleges? If that be not the case, why are the Government so eager for such information as must have reached them, in a more elaborate and detailed fashion, through their own officers, than what we can give them?

It is unfortunate that we cannot in this connection forget the propaganda that has been and is being carried on by interested persons both in India and in England, and by the Anglo-Indian Press generally, regarding the work of the primary Education Department of the Corporation. I had occasion to contradict such mis-statements on two previous occasions. There is a conviction in certain quarters that the Government, in addressing the letter to the Corporation, in which seven out of eleven questions relate to the subject-matter of such propaganda, have been influenced by them or else it is difficult to understand the need and urgency of the letters at this stage when bigger questions affecting the ratepayers of Calcutta, e.g. the drainage question, required our undivided attention and care.

After all, what is our crime? Within the last nine years we have increased the number of our schools from 26 to 226, and the number of students in these schools has gone up to 26,000 from 2,000. I do not claim that the methods or results of our teaching are excellent, but the figures are

there. The teachers are mostly appointed by the Chief Executive Officer, after such inquiry as he can and chooses to make. If we have made mistakes, I say, let us at least have the privilege of making mistakes and profit by them. If the Government had any constructive suggestions to make regarding the conduct and management of schools, students and teachers, a friendly gesture would have been welcome, but why this thunder?

26 July 1932

Local versus Central Authority

Mr President and members of the Madras Corporation, I thank you for the cordial welcome that you have given to Sir Nilratan Sircar and myself and the honour that you have done me by arranging this function at such a short notice this afternoon. It is an honour that you have done to the members of the Calcutta Corporation and to the people of Calcutta. There is a very close link between Calcutta and Madras, and I take this reception as an indication of your desire to have a closer co-operation with other city corporations and to meet the representatives of such corporations not merely on ceremonial occasions like this but also for the purpose of discussing matters of common interest and of profiting by the example of what other corporations are doing regarding problems of common nature.

If we look back into the history of municipal corporations in India, we find that more than 2,000 years ago, we had in India city corporations which laid down definite rules for building and enforced well-thought-out sanitary laws and constructed thoroughfares for the use of the ratepayers of the cities. It is needless for me to add that such city corporations in those days must have framed these laws in consonance with the needs of the communities which were affected by such laws. Today the city corporations in India are framed on the model of similar corporations in the West. The city corporations have to deal with the everyday life of the individual ratepayers. Therefore, the programme and policy, which such corporations should follow, must be in conformity with the condi-

Speech in reply to the civic address presented by the Corporation of Madras on 26 August 1932, when Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy and Sir Nilratan Sircar visited that city for the medical examination of Subhas Chandra Bose, who, detained there by the Government of India under Regulation III of 1818, was then seriously ill. In this speech Dr Roy reaffirms the stand taken a month earlier in his statement before the Corporation of Calcutta on the question of Local *versus* Central Authority.

tions, habits, customs and manners of the people for whom such regulations are framed. It is clear, therefore, that city corporations in India today must modify the plan on which corporations are framed in England to suit their country. There are common problems which city corporations face all over India—the question of the disposal of sewage, the conservancy arrangements that are to be made, the water-supply that is to be maintained, the building rules that have got to be enforced. These and similar problems are common to all the city corporations in India.

I find that the Madras Corporation has taken the lead in the matter of providing free and compulsory education in the city. I have also been told by your President that you spend large sums of money, amounting to almost 20 per cent of your total income, for providing education and medical relief to the ratepayers. In such matters, your Corporation would give points to other Corporations in India. We are also attempting to increase provisions for education and medical relief in our city, but we cannot say that we have reached the stage that you have.

I find also that your Corporation is faced with financial difficulties and you have proposed that a terminal tax should be levied on all persons entering Madras by train. There is a curious psychology behind the imposition of such taxes in different parts of this country. In Rangoon, for instance, they do not impose a tax on persons entering the town, but they tax a person when he leaves it. I must say that you are modest in your demand. We in Bengal impose tax not only on those using railway trains but also on those who use steamers to reach Calcutta. We make them pay at the time of entering the city which would provide them with the amenities of city life. We also make them pay when they leave the city to remind them of the amenities they enjoyed during their stay with us. These taxes, however, do not come to the Calcutta Corporation, but to the Calcutta Improvement Trust, and, therefore, they do not augment the finance of the Calcutta Corporation. In any case, your method of balancing your budget will certainly be an example to other corporations and lead them to adopt similar methods. That is the reason why I suggest that representatives of the city corporations all over India should meet periodically and compare notes.

There is another important reason why I desire that such meetings

should take place. We are passing through changing times and it is quite on the cards that sooner rather than later big constitutional changes will occur in this country resulting in a great deal of the power being delegated to the people of the country. These impending changes make me utter this warning at this stage. If you look to the country from which we have received the pattern of the municipal corporations in which we work today, namely, England, you will find that there is a tendency on the part of the Central Executive to interfere with the Local Authorities in the different Corporations. In the matter of looking after the interests of the ratepayers, the Local Authorities enjoy the same representative character as the members of the Legislature do with regard to the matters which concern the country as a whole, and, therefore, neither the Central Authority nor the Local Authorities should be considered to be supreme. All Local Authorities are creatures of Statutes and as such they have to work under the provisions of the Acts which created them. The Legislature provides penalty in many cases for any departure from the provisions of the Act and also makes provisions for interference by the Central Authority under certain specific conditions. Within these limits the city corporations do enjoy complete freedom to develop themselves in their own way and fulfil their responsibilities. Individuals like corporate bodies desire freedom within certain limits. Therefore, it is not open to the Central Authority to construe the provisions of the Act in a way as to render it possible for them to interfere with the action of the Local Authorities more than is provided for in the Act itself. I can quite visualize the time under Swaraj when attempts may be made by the Central Authority to interfere with the Local Authorities. The relation of the Local Authorities in England with the Central Authority is expressed by Rt. Hon'ble Mr Masterman in his book, *How England is Governed*. In it there is one pithy sentence which runs thus: "All the Local Authorities in England hate each other, but they all together hate the Central Authority more." Therefore, I feel the time has come when Local Authorities in India should meet and consult one another for the purpose of protecting the interest of the ratepayers, whom they serve, from undue interference from Central Authority.

26 August 1932

A Five-Year Plan for Calcutta

CALCUTTA, the erstwhile City of Palaces, is in danger of being outclassed by its younger rivals in India. If it is to retain its title in the face of such competition, it has to formulate definite schemes for its development, and execute them within a specified time. Such schemes, while providing for immediate improvement, should keep in view the ever-growing needs of an expanding city. In 1830, the population of Calcutta was nearly 4,00,000. Today, a hundred years after, it has to cater for the needs of one and a quarter million people living in 1,70,000 houses (including *bustees*), dotted over an area of 30 square miles and to provide for them 70 million gallons of filtered water a day carried along 470 miles of water-mains. Provision has to be made for removing 120 million gallons of sewage a day during dry weather and 1,200 tons of refuse daily. The number of school children attending the 230 Corporation Free Primary schools is 30,000. With this increase in area and population, the receipts and expenditure have increased by 50 per cent within the last ten years. Increased provisions have been made for education, water-supply, medical relief, drainage and conservancy. Rapid changes have taken place during this period in the physiognomy of the city. The operation of the Calcutta Improvement Trust has demolished old landmarks, with the result that crowded quarters of the city have been converted into broad thoroughfares and marshy and undeveloped areas have become inhabited. Such operations have markedly altered the lay-out of the drains, water-mains, gas-mains and electric cable lines. We are passing through rapidly changing times. And yet a further change has taken place during the last decade. With the altered constitution of the Act, the Corporation has undergone a remarkable change in its composition and the general outlook of the body corporate has altered correspondingly within the last ten years. In 1924, when the late Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das undertook the responsibility of introducing life

into the newly constituted democratic constitution, he laid down a scheme, in the following words, for future Corporations to follow:

1. Free primary education;
2. Free medical relief for the poor;
3. Purer and cheaper food and milk supply;
4. Better supply of filtered and unfiltered water;
5. Better sanitation in *bustees* and congested areas;
6. Housing of the poor;
7. Development of suburban areas;
8. Improved transport facilities; and
9. Greater efficiency of administration at a cheaper cost.

The representatives of the ratepayers of Calcutta accepted the lead of the great Mayor and have since then tried to fulfil the ideal.

After ten years of work it is desirable that we should pause a while and look back as well as forward to appreciate the progress we have made and to understand the problems that still lie before us awaiting solution. While much has been accomplished by the new Corporation, a great deal more remains yet to be done. We have to strive for and struggle towards the ideal. In a developing institution the needs are great and manifold, and there must be divergence of opinions as to how the restricted income is to be apportioned and utilized. I am quite aware of the fact that the Corporation is not a free agent, that forces beyond its control hamper any well-considered scheme of development, but we shall have to put up with such opposition, and rush full-steam ahead towards the goal. Ten years ago, it was not possible to lay down a plan for reconstruction, as any such plan must take into consideration the income and expenditure of the Corporation and take into account its financial position. The world, and this city was no exception to the rule, had just emerged from the effects of the world war. It was impossible at that time to get a correct idea of the finances of the Corporation, and all that the young, newly constituted democratic Corporation could do was to make at once increased provision for education, medical relief, and water-supply. They have succeeded beyond their expectations. For example, in place of 19 Corporation primary schools in 1923-24, there are now 230 such schools, which impart

education to nearly 30,000 children, thus implementing the scheme laid down by the Corporation in May, 1924. It is now time to lay down a programme for the next five years and adjust the receipts and the expenditure of the Corporation accordingly.

The first item in my programme is to restore the equilibrium of the Corporation finances. It is true that the present year opens with a credit balance of nearly 90 lakhs of rupees, the accumulated savings of previous years, of which 40 lakhs have to be set apart as a working balance. The rest, 50 lakhs, are available for new works. I shall refer to this later on. But on a close scrutiny of the Corporation budgets for the last twenty years, it is found that the Corporation receipts have now reached the high watermark, and is not likely to increase further unless the rates and taxes are enhanced—a measure which is unthinkable under the present state of economic distress—or until new sources of income are devised, a proposition which in itself must be problematical. The receipts figure has reached an average of Rs. 2,35,00,000. There has lately been a tendency for the annual expenditure to exceed the receipts. This should be avoided and the revenue expenditure should be curtailed according to receipts. On the expenditure side, certain statutory obligations, like the payment to the Improvement Trust, the provision of interests and sinking funds for the loans raised, etc., consume on the average about 32 per cent of the receipts. The expenditure on the essential services, such as the maintenance of proper roads, the sufficiency of water-supply, the removal of refuse and sewage, the lighting of the streets, the provision for education and medical relief, amounts to 38 per cent of the total income. The cost on establishment, including gratuities, pension, provident fund contribution, grain compensation allowance, amounts roughly to 25 per cent of the total receipts, leaving only about 5 per cent for new works. Such new works include various recurring items of importance, e.g., construction of new roads, sewers, drains, pavements, etc., which should, in my opinion, be planned out yearly so as not to cost more than 5 per cent of receipts. By close supervision, however, and by adopting newer, cheaper and more efficient methods of road construction or sewage and refuse disposal, it is possible to restrict the costs on these heads to 35 per cent of the total receipts, and the cost on the establishment may also be reduced by 2 per cent, thus giving

us an additional 5 per cent, i.e., nearly 11 lakhs of rupees for development works. A good portion of this sum should, in my opinion, be spent on such items as are productive and bring returns. This money should be spent on the development of markets on Corporation land. The markets, the lands and buildings belonging to the Corporation should be run on business footing and made to yield, say after three years, a decent return. The adoption of such schemes for reducing expenditure and augmenting our receipts have become imperative and urgent. Unless we are able to do so and adjust our finances, so as to leave some balance yearly, we cannot have the capacity of floating loans for large construction works, like the drainage and outfall schemes, which brook no delay.

The next item in the plan should be the improvement of the *bustees*. I do not wish to give a graphic description of the huts, lanes and the sanitary provision of these areas, where the poor, the wretched and the ignorant live. They are provided with no sewers and lights, ill-supplied with water, filtered and unfiltered, and are without roads and other sanitary conveniences. These people need all these, and at the same time their civic and sanitary consciousness has to be roused. No money spent on these items can go waste, and unless we improve these areas, they will remain a perpetual source of menace and concern even to those who live in palaces. I know the problem is complex and its solution would require tons of money. The *bustee*-owners, the residents of these localities and the Corporation must co-operate to tackle the problem. It is best to begin with providing for the most urgent of these items, namely, the provision of sewers. This will, it has been estimated, cost about Rs. 15 lakhs. This money may be spent out of the closing balance of Rs. 50 lakhs which should be available for such capital expenditure.

The third item, closely linked with the second, is the immediate adoption of some method of quick disposal of refuse and the abolition of the present system of loading hundreds of tons of dirt and garbage into open trucks from platforms situated on one of the biggest roads of Calcutta. This system is antediluvian and the present method of disposing refuse, started when this road was the easternmost limit of the town, is outmoded and should now be immediately and completely abandoned. The practice of dragging along a hundred wagons of stinking refuse along a main

thoroughfare of the city, spreading dirt, filth and infection on the way, is an anachronism. It is estimated that if the refuse be carried by lorries, it will mean a capital cost of Rs. 10 lakhs. This must be taken up at once and the expenditure met from the balance available for such purposes.

The next item in the programme should be the erection of a plant for the development of more electrical energy. A scheme with regard to it has been sanctioned by the Corporation which is estimated to cost Rs. 22 lakhs. The development of this scheme will not only reduce our recurring cost on lighting, but will give us additional cheap power for workshops where a large variety of our own requirements may be manufactured cheaply and under our supervision. Even a cautious estimate will show that the use of electrical energy generated by us will mean a saving of Rs. 6 to 7 lakhs a year in our annual recurring expenditure. I reckon that the above item in my plan should not take more than three years for completion. When they are given effect to and completed, the Corporation credit balance should appreciate sufficiently to enable us to take up other items of development. I shall, even at the risk of repetition, put these items *seriatim*:

1. Restoration of the financial equilibrium of the Corporation.
2. Improvement of *bustees* and provisions of sewers in them.
3. Abolition of platforms and the railway, for the removal of refuse.
4. Erection of our own generating plants for electricity.
5. Further improvement of *bustees*—provision of light and of larger quantities of water to them.
6. Increase in the number of primary schools so that all children of school-going age in Calcutta numbering 80,000 may obtain free education. I find that, in addition to the 30,000 boys studying in the Corporation's primary schools, 45,000 children read in the primary department of the aided schools in Calcutta. A provision is already there in the Corporation to teach the remaining children of school-going age, namely, in the age group 6 to 11, and such responsibility can be undertaken by us without much extra cost.
7. Provision of open air schools for the "waifs and strays" and night schools for adults. If necessary, the Act is to be amended for the purpose.
8. Adoption of sanitary measures for the purpose of prevention of diseases and epidemics, and provision of parks, specially for ladies.

These may be taken up, as funds permit, in the order mentioned and it should not be beyond the capacity of the Calcutta Corporation to achieve these objects within five years.

The essence of success of a plan of this character is that once it is taken up, it should be pursued with determination to the end. Before it is taken up the plan should be thoroughly considered and its financial provision secured, since it is fatal to start a scheme of this character and leave it in the mid-stream. For this reason I do not include, in a plan of this character, any of the projects which are usually financed from loan. These loan schemes have an innate safeguard against failure, namely, that a loan scheme cannot be floated unless the capacity of the Corporation to borrow is proved beyond doubt and not until the scheme is sanctioned by the Corporation and by the Government. Once the money is raised for a particular loan scheme, it cannot be diverted for any other purpose without the previous sanction of the Government. Therefore, such schemes generally go on uninterrupted. The risk that a reconstruction plan of the character, indicated above, runs is that a scheme, once started under very good auspices, may, while it is nearing completion, be turned down by a succeeding administration of the Corporation, and such half finished schemes do nobody any good.

I have made a hurried survey of the plan which the Calcutta Corporation should adopt. I do not claim infallibility regarding the details of the plan. I do not suggest that there are no other items which some may consider important and urgent. But I venture to assert that the plan I have outlined will appeal to many. We should cease drifting along without thought, without care and without concern.

1932

From *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette*, Eighth Anniversary Number, 26 November 1932

A Planned Corporation

LAST year, as Mayor of the city, I put forward in the columns of the Eighth Anniversary Number of *The Calcutta Municipal Gazettee*, an outline of a plan for the Corporation. The first decade after the passing of the Calcutta Municipal Act, 1923, is just over. During this period, not only have the city's geographical boundaries, its physiognomy, its area and population altered but the system of Corporation administration, the outlook of the Councillors, the attitude of the ratepayers have also changed. The first Mayor of the city, Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das, placed before the public the civic ideal of the Congress Party, which, backed by the votes of the ratepayers, obtained an undisputed authority over the affairs of the city in 1924, and have practically retained the same position for ten years. Some attempts have been made to realize these ideals but a great deal remains to be done. For this purpose a well laid plan is essential in order that the Corporation may not drift along. The goal is before us. The course of action that is to be adopted, the work that has to be done, the methods that are essential for success must be governed by a plan. I make no apology, therefore, for reverting to the same subject.

The finances of the Corporation have not appreciated in recent years and one cannot overlook the fact that the recent amendment of the Act in the teeth of violent popular opposition has not helped in producing that calm atmosphere which is essential for restoring the financial stability of the Corporation. It is a well-known fact that financial progress can only be achieved in an atmosphere of mutual trust and co-operation, and no corporate body can undertake any business profitably when the members thereof have opportunities of working at cross purposes. But part of the Corporation activities are and have to be run on business lines. Therefore, even to counteract the effects of such misunderstandings, a planned campaign is essential. In my article last year I laid down certain propositions.

They were:

1. That the annual receipts of the Calcutta Corporation have reached the high watermark, the figure being in the neighbourhood of Rs. 2,35,00,000.

2. That out of its income certain statutory liabilities of the Corporation have to be met and they amount to roughly 32 per cent of the receipts. At present there is no chance of this figure being reduced.

3. That the average establishment cost is about 25 per cent. This item may be reduced as pointed out later.

4. That the cost of essential services amounts to 38 per cent of the receipts. This item needs closer examination for purposes of reduction.

After providing for the above four items, we are left with 10 to 11 lakhs of rupees for new works. The city is expanding—the shapes, dimensions, appearances of its principal landmarks have altered beyond recognition and will continue to do so under the combined operations of the Improvement Trust and the social and economic upheavals of recent years. The Improvement Trust operations alone have required owners of properties in the heart of Calcutta to leave their ancestral homes and migrate to outlying areas. Therefore, Rs. 11 lakhs is not a big amount to meet the cost of expansion. New roads have to be constructed, additional parks have to be provided for, extra machineries and plants have to be purchased, new buildings have to be erected, and all these require outlay of considerable capital. But, the Corporation has often to raise loans to finance big projects. Therefore, it would not be possible, nor will it be wise, to retrench this provision.

If, however, any plan is to be adopted, its financial bearing cannot be ignored. It would be idle even to discuss such a plan unless it is possible to find the means to carry it into effect. Let me consider, therefore, what the most urgent needs of the city are and how the funds are to be raised to provide for such needs. As I said in my previous article, I think the first item should be the improvement of the *bustees*. It is not on mere sentimental grounds that I put this item at the head of the list. I feel convinced that if the Corporation allows these *bustees* to thrive and grow in filth and wretchedness, in squalor and dirt, the whole city is thereby made to suffer financially, socially and hygienically. Then the question

arises, can the Corporation directly do anything to improve the *bustees,* or has it to depend on those who own the *bustees*? The relevant sections of the Act give the power to the Corporation "to require the owner of a *bustee* or the occupier of the hut to carry out certain improvements", for example, filling up insanitary tanks, construction of drains, privies, bathing platforms, etc. If the owners fail to do so the Corporation can undertake these works and recover the expenses, particularly in the case of *bustee*-owners, and even "to acquire the *bustees* and effect these improvements or to take measures for the erection of sanitary dwellings for the working classes or for the poorer classes or both on such land". Therefore, the powers of the Corporation to effect such improvements are there.

The next question that arises is, where are the funds to come from? It is true that in many cases the cost of developing the *bustees* may ultimately be recovered from the owners, but in such cases advances will have to be made by the Corporation, in other cases the Corporation may have to acquire the whole *bustee.* For these purposes, funds are necessary. Power to act is of no avail unless necessary funds for the purpose are procurable. To meet this, I suggest that retrenchments be effected on the present recurring expenditure on the *bustees.* At present the *bustees* are, from the administrative point of view, under dual control—the Health officer and the Engineering Departments exercise parallel authority in these areas. My first proposal will be to put the *bustees* under one department, the *bustees* department. The present establishment list shows that this department has only a few levellers, draftsmen and other workers. The people cannot give any relief to the *bustees* in sanitary and other matters. In the beginning, that is to say, until developments are completed, it would be advisable not to decentralize the administration of the *bustees* but place the responsibility of providing for water-supply, lighting and other civic amenities under one control. This suggestion will, I reckon, reduce the cost. Then, again, as a result of such improvements, the annual valuation of *bustees* will be increased, so that the receipts from consolidated rates in respect of these improved *bustees,* will be correspondingly increased. My next proposal is that common privies in the *bustees,* in areas where the main sewers exist, can be connected with the sewers. This will not only improve the sanitary condition of the *bustees* but will also save the recur-

ring establishment cost to the extent of over Rs. 2 lakhs annually. In my opinion, the cost of connecting the *bustee* privies with the main sewers should not exceed 15 lakhs, part of which may be subsequently realized from the owners. I had suggested and I still suggest that this sum should be advanced out of the closing balances. For the *bustees* department a Development Fund should be created to which an initial advance of Rs. 15 lakhs may be made from the closing balances. Any saving on the present expenditure of this department should be put on the credit side of this fund, so that this advance may within five or six years be paid back to the general funds. I feel that such a well-thought-out plan of this nature will not only improve the *bustees* and reduce the incidence of diseases but will also ultimately prove to be economical.

Similar in purpose is the proposal to carry refuse more expeditiously and economically to the pumping areas. In my opinion, with an expenditure of eight or ten lakhs the whole of Districts 1, 2, 3, and part of District 4 can get the refuse in these areas carried to Dhapa by lorries. I would suggest that this amount be also advanced from the balance. This will necessarily remove a huge nuisance the Municipal Railway and its platforms in north Calcutta—and will certainly improve the entire condition of the city. At present the refuse is carried from different areas of the city by means of bullock and horse carts to platforms from which the carts are emptied into railway trucks, which are then pulled by an engine to the dumping ground. According to my calculations, the saving on recurring cost by replacing the carts by lorries will be sufficient to pay back this advance from the general fund in six years' time. It has been argued that this will operate harshly on the large number of sweepers and *dhangars* who have been serving the Corporation for years. To this my reply is that whenever and wherever mechanization has been introduced in the methods of production and distribution, the cost thereof has diminished and yet the people previously doing the same by manual labour have adjusted themselves to changed conditions. Many of the sweepers, the old hands, will be absorbed to work in lorries. The rest of them who come to Calcutta from distant places in batches, would in future seek other places where their services might be utilized.

For the next five years, therefore, I have proposed the diverting of

nearly 25 lakhs of rupees from the closing balances. Although I have explained that the advances made would be recouped, it is unsafe to deplete its balances below a certain level. Therefore, the next item in the programme should be the curtailment of expenditure. To do this, I propose the following:

1. The cost for pumping water and sewage can be reduced, first, by the Corporation generating its own current, and, secondly, by better organization of the pumping stations. I am convinced after studying the figures carefully that at least Rs. 4 lakhs a year can be so saved.

2. The cost of repairs of roads, which is a very heavy item, should be reduced by better organization. For example, the work of the Motor Vehicles Department can be easily so organized as to enable some of the lorries, without extra cost, to do the carting of materials for road construction. A properly developed self-contained Road Department, both for the construction of new roads and for the repair of old ones, should save expenditure. At present two sets of plants, engines and establishments are kept by the Corporation and the Improvement Trust, and are found to be working simultaneously in contiguous areas. It will be recalled that the Corporation pays to the Trust annually over 20 lakhs of rupees. It will be in the interest of the Corporation to make suitable arrangement with the Trust so that duplication is avoided and cost saved. In my opinion, this will certainly save Rs. 5 lakhs in the cost on the head.

3. The cost of lighting streets, municipal offices and markets with electricity can be reduced, with practically no extra capital cost, by using the current generated by the Corporation and thus a saving of about 1 to 2 lakhs of rupees a year may be effected.

4. The withholding of all extension of services to officers unless exceptional circumstances call for such extension. I suggest this not only in the interest of economy but in fairness to the men in the lower ranks who work hard and expect higher positions in the Corporation. This is likely to save 40 to 50 thousand rupees a year.

5. A proper survey of the buildings, lands and properties of the Corporation is an urgent measure of economy. The Corporation owns big plots of lands and buildings which are not being utilized in any way and which might either be disposed of at a profit or be used for various purposes

for which the Corporation now spends money out of its funds. For this purpose, I had suggested and formed a Land Development Committee in 1931, but unfortunately the Committee never met. A large number of schools, ward associations, etc. are now housed in rented buildings. This money might be saved by utilizing the present properties. Lands were purchased or taken on lease by the Corporation for erecting markets, etc. If the Corporation utilizes these plots for constructing markets, they will yield a very decent revenue.

In order that the plan suggested above, or similar suggestions put forward by other observers, might be implemented, it is desirable that the Corporation should immediately form a Special Development Committee with, if necessary, members co-opted from outside. If the Corporation loses this opportunity and drifts along, Heaven help us.

1933

From *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette*, Ninth Anniversary Number, 25 November 1933.

'Beware while it is yet Time'

THE Calcutta Municipal (Amendment) Bill, which has just been passed by the Bengal Assembly and is yet being discussed in the Upper House, has aroused enormous controversies. The Hindu community, on the one hand, has vigorously protested against what they regard as an outrage on the claims of this community in the matter of representation in the Calcutta Corporation. On the other hand, the Muslims have claimed that justice and fair play demand an urgent amendment to the Calcutta Municipal Act, 1923, and they claim a higher proportion of representation in the Corporation to be elected by the members of their own community so that such persons might represent real 'Muslim' interests and protect them.

Let us examine in some detail the reasons given by the Government for bringing about an amendment to the Calcutta Municipal Act. The Government of the day is controlled by Muslims; they consider that their community should, by virtue of their numerical strength in the province, dominate all the departments which are controlled by the legislature. This may be the reason why the number of Muslims is proposed to be increased. The Government have further stated in the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill that "Muslim public opinion has emphatically expressed the view that Muslim Councillors returned by joint electorates have very largely represented the views of the majority community and have not been truly representing Muslim interests." No mention is made therein of the reasons

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At the fourth general election held under the Calcutta Municipal Act, 1923, the system of joint electorates in Calcutta Corporation with reservation of seats for the Muslims, replaced, in accordance with the provisions of the Act, the previous system of separate electorates for the Muslims. The Calcutta Municipal (Amendment) Bill, 1939, sought to restore separate electorates for the Muslims in the Corporation on the analogy of the electoral provision of the Government of India Act, 1935. It was eventually passed in spite of great opposition, both within and without the legislature.

which led the Government to increase the number of Muslim Councillors in the Calcutta Corporation.

Principle of Muslim Representation

When the Calcutta Municipal Bill was introduced in the Bengal Council by the late Sir Surendranath Banerjea, in November 1921, he gave his reasons for fixing the minimum number of Muslim representatives at 13, and he also gave the views of the then Government regarding the principle which was followed by the Government in fixing the minimum number of seats to be reserved for the Muslims in the Calcutta Corporation. The Government, he said, followed the triple formula which they adopted in respect of nomination of municipal councillors in the mofussil areas, as this formula had worked well and given satisfaction to the Muhammadan community. "The voting strength, the rating strength and the numerical strength" of the local Muhammadan residents in proportion to the whole community were calculated, and on the basis of such calculation the number of Muslim members to be nominated by the Government in any particular municipality was determined. Applying this principle, the Government found that in the Calcutta Corporation a little over 12 seats for the Muslim community was sufficient. The Government therefore proposed in the Bill for the reservation of 13 seats for the Muslims. This number was subsequently increased to 19. On reference to the Census figures it appears that the proportion of the Hindus in Calcutta has steadily increased from 1901, when it was 64·9 per cent, till in 1921 it reached 69·6 per cent. In 1931 the number fell to 68·6 per cent of the total population. The Muslims, on the other hand, were 30·2 per cent of the total population in 1901 but in successive years the number decreased. In 1911, it was 28·7 per cent; in 1921, it was 25 per cent, and in 1931, it was 26 per cent. Therefore, on the basis on which the number of Municipal Councillors was provided for in the Calcutta Municipal Act of 1923, the Muslim community today could not claim more than 13 seats, perhaps less. If there be another basis for calculation, the Government should have mentioned it, without which it is difficult to justify the increase of the number of Muslims representatives in the Calcutta Corporation. It is equally difficult to understand the method of distribution of such increased

Muslim seats in the Corporation. On a reference to the Schedule appended to the proposed Municipal Amendment Bill, it is found that Ward 9 and 28 have been given 2 seats each, although the total numbers of Muslims in these Wards do not exceed 220 to 250 per thousand of population; whereas Wards 14 and 21, which have 450 to 500 Muslims per thousand of the population, have been given I seat each, and Ward 26, which has got 500 Muslims per thousand of the total population, has also been given 1 seat.

Mode of Representation

With regard to the mode of representation, Sir Surendranath Banerjea was definitely of opinion that communal representation interfered with the growth of Indian nationhood, and this still remains the opinion of the large bulk of nationalists of India today. Sir Surendranath Banerjea said: "Communal representation divides our community into water-tight compartments and makes us think and act as partisans and not as citizens, as Hindus or Muhammadans or Christians, not as Indians, and it must, therefore, interfere with the evolution of that citizenship which is the fundamental condition of nationhood." It is true that the majority of Muslim members of the then Council protested against joint electorate, but far-seeing members of the Muslim community, like the late Sir Abdulla Suhrawardy, pleaded for joint electorate. We know that, as a result of compromise, it was decided to have separate representation in the Calcutta Corporation for nine years, and then thereafter the representation was to be through joint electorate.

Evidently the present Government has got a different method of approach to this problem of communal representation in the Corporation. In the Bill it is stated that they followed the principle of the Government of India Act of 1935. The basis of representation in the Act is the Communal Award formula of Ramsay MacDonald, a formula which has been condemned and rejected by all communities, including the Muslims. I well remember the opposition made by Mr Jinnah to this formula in the early months of 1935. However that may be, so far as Bengal is concerned, it is well recognized that this Communal Award has done less than justice to the Hindu community and, the Congress has unequivocally condemned it, although they were not prepared to fight the Muslims on this

issue, leaving the final arbitration to an outside authority like the British Government. As the resolution of the Congress states, the whole problem of "the mode of representation" is a domestic question and should be decided by agreement between the two communities and not left to outsiders to decide.

To Neutralize Congress Influence

The Government have increased the number of Muslim Councillors by 2. It is difficult to understand how the Muslim community will gain by increasing the number of representation from 19 to 21 or 22. They will still form a very small minority in that body. If it is a question of representation of Muslim interests, 19 people can as well voice this interest as 21. The only point to commend it is that the Muslim Ministers can now approach their brother Muslims and tell them that they have this increase to their credit. On the other hand, the increasing number of Muslims and Anglo-Indians in the Corporation, leaving the number of Hindu members to its original figure, as is proposed in the Bill, gives one the impression that an attempt has been made in the Bill to neutralize the influence which the Hindu representatives in the Corporation, most of whom happen to be members of the Congress, possess today. As a matter of practical proposition, it is my conviction that even an increase in the number of Muslim Councillors by 2 or 3 will not, in actual practice, be found to affect the position and influence of the Congress in the Corporation, provided the Congress members themselves give of their best, honestly and steadfastly, in the interest of the ratepayers. There is a subtle attempt made in the infamous Bill to throw the Muslims into the arms of the European and Anglo-Indian Councillors, a combination which might in certain cases, with the help of the nominated members, reduce the Congress majority into a minority. This coalition would have an added strength because with this majority the coalition could elect five Aldermen according to their own choice. This seems to be the basis of calculation of the framers of the present amending Bill. If I may make a forecast, I can state my conviction that so long as the Congress members work honestly and sincerely, there need be no apprehension in their minds of being a subservient body in the Calcutta Corporation, even if the proposed amending Bill is carried through

the Council. But, at the same time, one cannot overlook the fact that the action taken by the present Government is not based upon reason, justice and fair play.

If the Government have some grounds for proposing the introduction of separate electorate for the Muslims in the Calcutta Corporation election, because the spokesmen of that community have long pleaded for it, is there any justification to suppress the demand for reservation of seats if such demand comes from the Scheduled Caste voters in Calcutta? This demand, having been once conceded, will know no end. The Momin community amongst the Muslims may also claim—and I understand they are already claiming—a certain number of Muslim seats to be reserved for them "in proportion to their population strength". Is the Muslim Ministry ready to allot these? If not, I say, beware while it is yet time.

1939

* From *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette,* Municipal Bill Special Number, 1 July, 1939.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICAL EDUCATION

Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy's contribution to the organization of medical education in India and his zeal for founding institutions for amelioration of public health, in the days when the Government was apathetic to such institutions and organizers had to depend on private munificence, are well known. A full account of his service to such institutions will require a volume to itself ; some of those who worked with him have given brief accounts of this elsewhere in this book.

This section shows some aspects of his service to Public Health and Medical Education. Dr Roy served *The Calcutta Medical Journal*, either as Editor or a member of the Board of Editors, during the period 1922-29 ; and some of his editorials, illuminating and incisive, on problems of public health have been collected here. His speeches on the subject in the Bengal Legislative Council in 1924-28, appearing in another section of this book, are to be read together with these.

Two addresses reproduced in this section, one delivered in 1929 as President of the All India Medical Conference, and the other in 1943 to the Medical Council of India, of which he was the first non-official President, discuss the problems of medical education in India, and, incidentally, give the readers an indication as to how he, along with other leaders of the medical profession in India, fought to uphold the prestige of the system of medical instruction in India when this was questioned by the General Medical Council of Great Britain.

The State of Health in Calcutta

THERE is no doubt that in spite of all the recent activities of the Improvement Trust, the general health of the town does not show much improvement so far as can be judged from the record of death-rates of the last few years. The Second City of the Empire has a huge and unwieldy cosmopolitan population, composed of different communities, each with its own peculiarities, its special customs and modes of living, its own religious observances and superstitions and weaknesses. No set of rules, no law, no scheme for healthy living can therefore be devised which would be effective and acceptable to all. The fact remains, however, that whenever an epidemic breaks out in Calcutta it makes a permanent home in the city and flares up periodically even if the disease were a member of the group known as 'preventible diseases'. It is desirable to pause and discover, if possible, the factors that are responsible for this state of affairs. A disease may spread rapidly and demand a high toll of human life only if the agencies are more virulent than found elsewhere or if their victims happen to have a lower than the ordinary resistance to infection. It is possible that the peculiar climatic conditions, the humidity, and the insanitary surroundings of this city are such as help the organisms to grow vigorously and acquire greater capacity to cause disease and death. Unfortunately, we have not yet devised any method of controlling and modifying the climate although the surroundings can, by taking proper measures, be made more healthy and inimical to the growth of bacteria. As for low resistance to infection, it is a factor which the people of Bengal, individually and collectively, can influence only by improving the physical condition of the people in general. It is undeniable that if the individual is lazy and ignorant he is surrounded by filth and dirt. It is not uncommon to see the refuse of a house scattered over the street and lanes around it, and even inside the house it is usual to find that the dirt of the courtyard, when gathered, is heaped in

the corners. A good deal of the insanitary condition is therefore due to the ignorance and indolence of the people, but the apathy of those in power is more reprehensible, almost criminal. Take, for example, the question of removal of the sewage and the supply of unfiltered water. In no other city would the existence of a sewage railway running through its residential areas be tolerated. The erection of open platforms where sewage carts are emptied into the trucks and the hours during which these carts and trucks, filled with sewage of the whole city, are allowed to loiter at these platforms are subjects over which the people of Calcutta have expressed their disapproval times without number but to no avail. Why must it be necessary to unburden these carts in the morning when people are about and not at night when the streets are empty. This is a problem which has never been satisfactorily faced and tackled by the Corporation. Why should the transfer of the filth from the carts to the trucks take place along an open platform and thus give the crows and the flies an opportunity to settle on them and spread infection to the neighbouring houses? This danger can easily be avoided by putting a shed over the platform.

A good deal has been heard and said recently about a typhoid epidemic in Calcutta. As if it is only this year that the epidemic has been virulent! As a matter of fact it has drawn notice because some highly placed officials have been attacked by it. But are the City Fathers not aware that in the majority of houses, the tank of unfiltered water is so placed that it is accessible to the members of the household and they are often seen to use this water for washing, bathing, cooking and sometimes even for drinking. It is true that most people in Calcutta are not aware that the water of the Hooghly river supplied to these tanks is not the same as the running water from the river stream. They do not know that the water of the tanks can and often does get polluted and that a good deal of the infection, as we are sure, come through this water. While in an average Indian home the food is cooked, no protection against infection is taken when using the tank-water for the purpose of washing and cleaning. Is it not possible to make an organized effort by the Corporation to enlighten the public regarding the danger of using such water? Is it not practicable to control the indiscriminate use of such water, and check infection by stringent inspection? We have here mentioned only two causes such as can

be immediately removed, but are largely responsible for undermining the health of this city. There are many other causes. We suggest that elaborate steps be taken to inform the public of the dangers of personal and communal uncleanliness. We suggest that more organized efforts be made to enlighten everyone of the need and necessity to take early steps to prevent the spread of an epidemic once it has appeared in a particular quarter of the town. This can be done by proper notification, by preventive inoculation and by insisting, if need be, on other methods of prevention.

This apathy on the part of the Corporation may be due partly to ignorance. In the executive body of the Corporation, which has primarily to deal with problems of health and sanitary engineering, there is hardly any room, one would think, for lawyers and merchants ; it is true that the proper administration of a municipal corporation requires a certain amount of common sense and knowledge of human nature and the lawyer and the commercial man may be expected to have both in fair amount, but there is no reason why a successful Health Officer or an engineer should not have these qualities also, besides his technical knowledge. It is therefore a pity that no safeguard has been provided in the recent Municipal Act to ensure the return of a majority of members belonging to the Medical and the Engineering professions. The meetings of the Calcutta Corporation are perhaps useful as good debates are useful. However, in order to get real work done, it is very essential that at least some men with technical knowledge of the problems of public health should be in charge of the affairs of this Corporation.

1923

From *The Calcutta Medical Journal*, April 1923.

Prevention of Diseases in Bengal

It is a happy sign of our times that the medical profession of Bengal, headed by the veteran Bacteriologist Dr Chatterji and true to the instincts of the profession, is considering steps for amelioration of the conditions in Bengal. No movement within recent years can be compared to this in considering its effect on the country as a whole. In order to make such movements successful it is essential that the work should be carried on by a proper organization and in ordinary circumstances it should have adequate financial support. The most successful, the most effective organization for the purpose would be one initiated and maintained by the State: first, because the Government have the Health service at its disposal, and secondly, because they have a command of finances. Why is the State so lethargic? Why does it not start a movement which would be popular and effective? The answers seem to be obvious, the financial resources are not adequate and, what is more important under the present system, no attempt has unfortunately been made to place the Health service on a popular basis. If the health of the people, if the sanitation in the villages are to be improved, and the incidence of preventible diseases diminished, it is imperative to take the people into confidence in order to get their co-operation. A strong committee consisting of representatives of the Services and of the medical profession should be devised for organizing the broad lines of the campaign and the details should be left to local bodies to handle. Decentralization and democratization are the essential preliminaries.

It is no small credit that a band of medical practitioners have come forward and started centres for relief work, and they are about to discuss plans for campaign concerning the whole province. But what is more important, they are gradually rousing the public to a sense of responsibility regarding sanitation and public health. A paper recently read by

Dr Brahmachari of the Public Health Department showed what organization could do to remove malaria from the infected area of Kumarkhali. The Doctor-Chairman of the Municipality induced it to raise the level of roads leading from the river to the interior of the town by cutting earth on either side of the roads. This meant digging two waterways on either side of the roads connected with the river and it was found possible to flood the entire town. The result has been marvellous. At the cost of mere two thousand rupees the incidence of malaria in the town has been much diminished and the sleep index has come down, within three years, from 76 to 11 per cent, and the degree of improvement was found to be proportionate to the degree of inundation the different wards were subjected to. Dr Banerjee read a paper on what field-work it is possible to do for the villages, and outlined the mode of organization necessary for the purpose. We are convinced that the prevalence of major diseases among the people could be eradicated by the people themselves if they were organized in the proper lines to fight them.

1923

From *The Calcutta Medical Journal*, June 1923.

Problems of Medical Education

THE question of providing for the people of Bengal efficient medical aid and good sanitation is exercising the mind of all true lovers of this country. It is a happy sign of our times that the European members of the medical profession also are showing their anxiety to help solve the problem. The article by Colonel Megaw in the *Indian Medical Gazette* is full of sympathy and reason. His appeal for organizing the medical aid available in the province for an effective campaign against diseases and for the purpose of enlisting the sympathy of the people and of the Government to carry on this campaign effectively is well timed. No one can doubt that even in the last few months the attitude of the Government and of the powers that be has changed. A greater demand is being made on behalf of the people to leave them free to solve the problems of sanitation in their own way. The Government on the other hand, working through the Ministers for the transferred subjects, are trying to co-operate with the people. This praiseworthy ambition of the people on the one hand and the attempt at co-operation on the part of the Government on the other form valuable factors towards the solution of the problem. Details of the programme for this solution can only be worked out with sympathy, goodwill and toleration. It is true that this problem of sanitation and preventive medicine is mixed up intimately with other problems, social and political. If a man is healthy, he can earn enough to maintain himself and his family in health and comfort. But if, owing to ill health, he cannot earn enough he is forced to live under insanitary conditions which again enhance the chances of his being more ill. This is a vicious circle. While it may not be possible for any organization to improve the general economic conditions of all, it is certainly possible to secure them sanitary surroundings and knowledge of rules of health. For this purpose it is necessary that we should have funds as well as men who are capable of undertaking research work, treatment and

propaganda campaign. Obviously, therefore, while the Government should increase the allotment of money to the department of Health, it is essential that steps should also be taken immediately to secure the proper kind of men who can carry out the above-mentioned duties. So the problem of giving to our youths suitable education in medicine is very important.

During the last thirty years, repeated attempts have been made by members of the medical profession outside the Government service to start and run medical institutions for the purpose of training youths of this province so that they may undertake the duties of providing medical relief. It cannot be denied that some of these institutions have been managed chiefly for profit, but even these institutions, and certainly some of the others carried on by people with nobler motives, have turned out students in large numbers fitted with some knowledge of medicine. One of these institutions has, after a great deal of struggle, come to be established as the only first grade non-official college in the whole of India. It is impossible to overlook the fact that the existence of such institutions indicates the anxiety which members of the medical profession and the laity have felt with regard to the provision of medical relief in this province. It also indicates the need for creating more opportunities for students to take up medicine as a profession.

The question arises, and it is an important question from various points of view, what should be the minimum knowledge that a member of the medical profession must possess before he can be entrusted with the lives of his fellow-beings. It is important to distinguish between the successful and the rational treatment of diseases. Even a quack who has no knowledge in foundation sciences may, and sometimes does, treat successfully various ailments. But a broad line of distinction separates the quack from the properly trained medical practitioner, a line based upon reasoned process of thinking, well-defined methods of sifting evidence, and a knowledge of the human body in health and in disease. Therefore the question resolves itself into this: what is the minimum amount of knowledge that the medical student should have to enable him to think and act rationally? In so far as knowledge can only be gained by proper education imparted during a certain period of time, the answer to the above question must indicate the period of study which a student should undergo before he is

left to take charge of human beings in disease. In view of the fact that 42 out of 45 millions of the people of Bengal live in villages, the medical practitioner of the future must be one meant to work in vallages and not in towns. The practitioner in the village must be trained to have confidence in himself, and he must have more of this than his brethren in the towns where suitable consultation and help are available at the shortest possible notice. It is also to be remarked that a large amount of activity of the future practitioners in villages should be directed towards the prevention of diseases rather than the cure. While the prevention of a disease concerns all who might have been its victims, the cure concerns only those who are already affected by it. As Colonel Megaw has said: "Large sums are spent on these ineffective efforts which have been directed towards soothing the sufferers and the injured rathter than towards seeking out and destroying the enemy. So long as the first principles of warfare are ignored in this manner success is inconceivable. We must have an organized and disciplined army specially trained for the great compaign instead of scattered individuals fighting single-handed against the effects of disease rather than against its causes." Any scheme of medical education in future should be directed more towards equipping the medical student with the requisite knowledge of preventing a disease rather than curing its victims. The medical practitioner of the future should know the causes of preventible disease, he should be trained in the methods adopted to effect the prevention, and should also be prepared under the prevailing social conditions of the villages, to instruct the laity in these methods and undertake propaganda work.

While it has been argued that medical education should be made cheaper so that medical relief may cost less it is a risky experiment to try to effect economy at the cost of efficiency. A certain section of the community will be always rich enough to pay for any treatment however expensive, but the larger section will, in the face of growing poverty of the country, be less and less able to meet the cost of such medical relief. The remedy does not lie in apportioning to villages inefficient doctors and insufficient stock of medicines, but it should come through governmental organization of medical relief for the poorer sections of the community. Mere patchwork and a few appointments here and there will not do. As

Colonel Megaw says: "The new conditions which have come about in recent times have made a revolution in the procedure necessary. The best plan will be to formulate an entirely new scheme and make provision for working it." The present system must first be ended and a new and improved one organized and introduced. Doctors to be specially trained for the purpose should work under this new system. Considered from these points of view, the problem of medical education will acquire a fresh interest and we are anxious that steps be taken immediately by all interested in the welfare of the country to tackle this problem successfully. If necessary, institutions should be established mainly for the purpose of training students in preventive medicine. In such institutions it is with this end in view that the training staff should be selected, the period of study fixed, and the initial qualifications of the students to be admitted laid down. And all this can and should be planned with the help of the Government and the co-operation of the people.

1924

From *The Calcutta Medical Journal*, February 1924.

The Training of Midwifery in India

Of late the medical profession in England, the General Medical Council of Great Britain and the public in that country have been greatly concerned at the enormous death-rate among new-born children and recently delivered mothers. They feel that a great deal of responsibility rests with the different examining bodies in England, Scotland and Ireland in not exacting a sufficiently high standard of efficiency in Midwifery from the candidates at the different examinations.

This wave of dissatisfaction with the present state of teaching in Midwifery and the consequent enormous death-rate (which, according to the Surgeon-General's report, amounted to a figure higher than the birth-rate in 1919) has reached India; and in so far as the Indian Universities are now being recognized by the General Medical Council for the purpose of registration, the same high standard is being asked for by the General Medical Council from the candidates who are taking examinations at the Indian Universities.

It appears, from a study of the recent discussions on the subject at the Pathological Club, Edinburgh and at the meetings of the Royal Society of Medicine during the years 1917, 1918 and 1919, that the regulations, laid down by the General Medical Council at its meeting in May 1907, were never given effect to *in toto*, even by the majority of hospitals in London, e.g., by those institutions that lie within a radius of three miles of the Central Office of the General Medical Council. As a matter of fact, it appears that even when this question was first discussed at the meeting of the General Medical Council, doubts were entertained as to the feasibility and usefulness of such rules regarding the teaching of Midwifery, so long as the materials available were insufficient for the purpose. The General Medical Council, in its zeal to see the teaching of Midwifery improved, has been insisting upon the conduction of twenty labour cases by each student

under "thorough medical supervision". The actual number of cases available for each student would depend on a variety of conditions over which neither the General Medical Council nor any other body can have any control. For example, in India, the number of labour cases available for students in any institution would always be much less than the number available in any English hospital in a year, and this is due to the disinclination on the part of a large number of patients, Hindus and Muslims, to get themselves examined and treated by male students. Unless society is willing to relax *purdah* rules and thus afford facilities to students, no command from anybody, even when coupled with the best organized efforts on the part of the Medical Institutions in India, can be of any avail. Then, again, it is an admitted fact that it is difficult to get a sufficient number of cases for the students in England, because of the operation of the regulations of the Central Midwifery Board; whereas in India a large body of untrained and illiterate women, who specialize in obstetrics in Indian homes, have successfully kept at bay any attempt to interfere in what they consider to be their legitimate and hereditary sphere of action. Under such circumstances, unless and until public opinion is formed against this custom, there seems to be no chance of any marked increase in the opportunities available for students to attend labour cases. So long as these conditions continue to operate, there will be a dearth of cases, and the only way to secure efficient training would be to employ a large number of teachers in each institution so that no clinical material is allowed to be wasted. The question of proper medical supervision, therefore, is one which depends mainly upon the financial condition of the institutions. It is not difficult to overcome this obstacle because it is possible to get in India today a sufficient number of honorary teachers ready to make good use of all available material of these institutions for the purpose of instructing the students.

It cannot be denied that, with a certain amount of organization and co-operation among the authorities of different institutions where labour cases are available, the need for the present body of students can be met, but even this form of organization would take time and it would be unfortunate if the General Medical Council insisted on the immediate fulfilment of the regulations of 1907 by the Universities and Colleges in

India regardless of the existence of other factors that might militate against such fulfilment. It is difficult to understand why so much pressure is being put on these Universities to satisfy certain rules which the majority of the twenty-four examining bodies in Great Britain and Ireland have found it too difficult to fulfil within a period of sixteen years. After all, the threat of disaffiliation held out by the General Medical Council, may, if carried into effect, be a blessing in disguise to the Indian Universities, because these institutions would then develop along their natural lines of progress which might be of the greatest benefit to the public in India.

1923

From *The Calcutta Medical Journal*, March 1923.

Medical Education in India

In 1910, Mr Abraham Flexner, working on behalf of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, enquired into the condition of teaching prevalent in the medical institutions in Europe and in America. The Royal Commission on University Education in London, in 1911-12, enquired into the system of teaching that obtained in the English schools. The Pathological Society of Edinburgh, in their report held a similar investigation and discussed the problem of medical education in all its bearings and published the same in the form of a report. The Royal Society of Medicine appointed a Committee to enquire into the system of midwifery teaching in the different schools in the United Kingdom. Sir George Newman, an expert in medical education, wrote two reports, one in 1919 and the other in 1923, the second one being the latest authoritative report published in England. At the Annual Congress held at Chicago on the 3rd March 1924, Mr Flexner read another paper on medical education and in the discussion that followed Dr Hervy Cushing, Dr Colwell and other prominent educationists took part. Mr Flexner compared the conditions as he found in 1909-12 with those existing at the present time. Two issues are clear from a study of the reports by the different observers made during the last twelve years. First, that a great majority of institutions, both in Europe and in America, like those in India, are defective either from the point of view of provision of facilities of teaching or provision of funds; and secondly, that these schools usually employ busy practitioners as teachers in clinical subjects, with the result that the teaching becomes an incident in the practitioner's life and as he has neither the leisure nor the opportunity to read and research, the clinical teaching imparted by him is defective. The criticism levelled by Mr Flexner on the medical education in Great Britain amounted to this that the British schools are too practical and short-sighted in their teaching and devote too little attention

to the development of research. "The Medical Research Council of Great Britain", says Mr Flexner, "has to a certain extent supplied this defect." The question is whether the education given to the students should be judged in the light of the practical knowledge obtained by them, and which is useful when they start their practice, or should the standard of education be based upon ideals difficult to achieve, though of very great value when achieved ; that is to say, the question is whether, with the limited funds such as are available in the majority of institutions in this country and elsewhere, we should attempt to produce a large number of physicians with low scientific attainments, or a smaller number of physicians of high attainments and wide culture. These problems do not affect the European countries only. The time has come when we, in India also, should ponder very carefully and try to solve these questions in our own way. Perhaps, the problem in India is even more difficult because, here, the private liberality is rarer and the State aid meagre. The process of reconstruction, therefore, of medical education in India must be slower, but, whether slow or rapid, it is essential that this process should be controlled, organized and directed by people who have an abiding interest in and sympathy with the craving of the youth of Bengal for medical education on the one hand, and with the needs of the country regarding medical relief on the other. Every country in the world has its own Council of Medical Education which exercises a wholesome stimulating influence on these difficult problems ; but, unfortunately, we, in India, are still tied on to the apron-strings of the Medical Council of another country. As a matter of fact, no curriculum of studies can be fixed for medical students, without considering the secondary and college education imparted to the students. These boys, while at college, must have had their intellectual equipments sufficiently developed to be able to follow the curriculum of studies in the Medical Colleges. The period of study at these medical institutions and the subjects to be taught should be governed by the considerations mentioned above. Then again attempts are being made to enforce the "ideals" in the matter of equipments and provisions for teaching in different subjects without considering whether Bengal and India, with all the prevalent epidemics and diseases, can afford to wait for the quality and neglect the quantity of medical relief. In trying to make provisions for achieving the ideal, it is

questionable whether we are not attempting to make medical education too costly and thereby pushing the cost of treatment much too high for the starving millions. We have had occasions in the past to comment in this journal on the declared necessity of providing a certain proportion of obstetric cases per capita in order to achieve the "ideal" ; this is insisted upon even when it is well known that the present social conditions cannot provide a sufficient number of cases for the large number of students who want to study medicine ; when it is apparent to all that the customs do not permit, in a large majority of cases, of male practitioner attending on an obstetric case.

These considerations we urge in the hope that changes should be made not to satisfy the requirements of the General Medical Council of Great Britain, but to ensure cheap and thorough education for the youths of this country so that we have enough qualified doctors for our suffering millions.

1923

From *The Calcutta Medical Journal,* May 1924.

The Origin of Jadavpur Tuberculosis Hospital

In 1911, a young man, whose father was a teacher in the Medical School and whom I had known slightly, came to see me on his return from England where he had an attack of pleurisy. The young man placed himself under my treatment. For two or three years he did quite well, and recovered to some extent his lost health, but towards the end of 1917 he had a relapse due to certain indiscretion and exposure. For several months he remained bed-ridden and his condition grew from bad to worse. One day he enquired of me what he should do with the little property his father had left him. He told me that his father owned a house which was partitioned between himself and his brother, and he pointed out to me the high wall which separated his brother's portion from his. He was a lovable young man and depended entirely upon me for advice as to the disposal of his share of his father's property. He was unmarried, and when he asked me the question as to what he should do with regard to the property, the advice I gave him was that he should leave it for the establishment of an institution for the treatment of the disease from which he was suffering. At that time there was no special bed or hospital for tuberculosis patients. Such cases were treated along with other patients in the general wards.

He listened to my advice, and a few days later he showed me a trust deed which he had made appointing Sir P. C. Ray, Sri B. K. Ghosh and myself as the executors to his will. His direction was that within five years from his death, a hospital for tuberculosis patients should be established, but if that was not possible then the money should go to the University to arrange for special instruction on the subject of tuberculosis. I was very keen upon establishing an institution as early as possible. I knew that some doctors in Calcutta had started a tuberculosis home near Giridih, but it was not flourishing because there was no one to look after it. I knew

also that there was a tuberculosis hospital or home in the Simla hills which I had occasion to visit three or four years before.

The young man died some time towards the end of 1918. When his condition was growing worse, a very good lady, Mrs Ghosh, wife of another doctor, took pity on him and started nursing him as well as preparing food for him. He died early one morning about 6 o'clock, when I was at his bedside. I asked his brother to take charge of the dead body because I was a Brahmo who could not deal with it, and Mrs Ghose was a Christian. His brother promptly sent word to say that he had nothing to do with his dead brother, and that those who had taken his money should provide for his cremation. The discussion took some time, and when he ultimately refused to do anything there was no option left for myself and Mrs Ghose but to take the body to the burning ghat. It was then about 10 o'clock and it was difficult to find students at that hour to carry the body to the ghat. Therefore, the best plan I could devise was to drive my two-seater car to the house of the dead friend, put the dead body in a cot and place the cot in the open car with myself driving and Mrs Ghosh sitting by my side. We arrived at the burning ghat, and the registrar there was at first somewhat suspicious, but when I divulged to him that I was a medical man and a teacher in the local medical school he agreed to give the certificate for cremation.

The hunt then began as to the disposition of the property left by the young man in order to give effect to the Trust which he had made. As the other two trustees were not medical men, I had to do the bulk of the work of establishing the hospital. The first problem arose as to the location of the hospital. There were a large number of medical friends who thought that the site should be somewhere in the western Himalayas with a dry atmosphere and that it should be a cold place. I argued against it for various reasons. In the first place, a sanatorium away from Calcutta could not be looked after by me personally, and it would be difficult to develop the hospital in a distant place. In the second place, I intended to have a hospital as near the town as possible so that those who could not get their patients admitted to the hospital might yet look after them in their own homes after having visited the hospital and seen how a tuberculosis patient should be treated. In fact, I regarded the hospital as a

laboratory for the training of persons who were unfortunate enough to have a tuberculosis patient in their house. The third reason why I selected Jadavpur was that it was a place where at any rate we could provide rest for the patient, give him plenty of fresh air and good food which were very important adjuncts for the treatment of tuberculosis. In those days no specific drug was discovered for the treatment of tuberculosis. We had to treat more or less on the *a priori* basis.

I began hunting for a site until ultimately we found an area of eight bighas at Jadavpur which I thought was particularly suitable for starting a hospital of this type. The total money which we collected out of the bequest of the young man amounted to Rs. 2 lakhs including house property. We, therefore, had to go slow and develop the institution gradually. We spent a fair amount for the purchase of the land and for building a nurses' quarter which is still present and 4 blocks to hold 4 patients, each block being a single room, open on all sides. This purchase of land and construction of the buildings on it consumed practically the whole of the cash that was left behind by the young man. We were left only with two landed properties. The trouble then arose as to finding the money for the maintenance of the hospital. These four patients cost us nearly Rs. 1,000 a month for diet, medicine, including the salary of nurse, attendants, etc.

As there was no fund in the trust property to meet the working expenses, I decided to take selected cases to the hospital and keep a watch. I used to go there once a day to treat these patients, and if necessary twice a day, and I met all the monthly expenses from my own earnings. Meanwhile I wrote to various persons in this country and abroad who had interest in the treatment of tuberculosis, enquiring whether they thought that climate was an all-important factor in the treatment of tuberculosis. The bulk of the replies I received indicated that rest, good food and a fair amount of treatment and fresh air were much more important than climate. After I had treated one hundred cases, I collected the data and was very much satisfied with the results. I then issued an appeal through the Press giving the results of the treatment of one hundred cases. The next morning I was very gratified to find a gentleman coming to me and telling me that he had read the appeal and he was prepared to meet all the recurring expenses for the institution and thus relieve me of the burden.

I was grateful to him. He only said that he had a good income, but he had no relation, as his only nephew had died of tuberculosis, and therefore he felt that he should give all help for running the hospital. This was how the Jadavpur Tuberculosis Hospital was started.

Meanwhile Dr Kumud Sankar Ray volunteered to take charge of the hospital and relieve me of attending on the patients. It was a great relief to me, and Dr K. S. Ray succeeded in developing the institution from its small beginning with four patients to a hospital which now has nearly 650 patients including those in the branch hospital at Kurseong.[1] The establishment of the hospital was brought about by the selfless gift of a young man who suffered from a disease for the treatment of which there was no hospital at that time.

From K. P. Thomas, *Dr B. C. Roy*, West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee, 1955.

[1] In recognition of Dr K. S. Ray's great service to the institution, the Tuberculosis Hospital at Jadavpur is now named after him.

The Future of Medical Profession in India

I THANK you most cordially for having given me this opportunity of talking to you about the future of the medical profession in India. I regret that on account of preoccupations and the shortness of time, my address is apt to be discursive. You will perhaps find that I have left out many things I should have mentioned, and I ask for your indulgence and help in filling up the lacunae.

The All-India Medical Association, as you are aware, was established for the purpose, amongst others, of organizing the members of the medical profession in order "to secure the promotion and advancement of allied sciences, maintain the honour, dignity and the interest of the medical profession and secure the co-operation between the members thereof". In pursuance of this object we have met this evening to consider various problems affecting the profession, to consider various laws already enacted or the legislative measures about to be adopted, which might seriously affect the medical profession, medical education or the health of the people of this country. Its membership is open to persons having registrable qualifications in India or "persons who have such medical qualifications as may be from time to time recognised by the Association as suitable for such membership".

We want to bring together and organize the whole profession, not merely those who profess and practise a particular system of medicine. Our purpose is to secure co-operation amongst all persons whom this Association may consider suitable for membership. Should we restrict the membership to such persons only as follow the Western system of medicine, or open the door to all those who practice, in different parts of the country, any other system with repute and success? If we take medicine merely as a science it may be argued that only those who are trained on scientific

Presidential Address at the All India Medical Conference, Lahore, December 1929

methods prevalent in the West should be eligible for the membership. But this, to my mind, is to take a very narrow view of the whole matter. On the other hand, if we define science as a systematized branch of human knowledge, we cannot ignore other systems. I have no doubt whatever that there was a time when the ancient practitioners in medicine—those who elaborated the Ayurvedic system centuries ago—possessed accurate knowledge of the nervous system, of the vascular system, of the changes in pulse in different diseases, and that their knowledge of pathology, such as we understand it today, was of a high order. Speaking in the Imperial Legislative Council in 1916, Sir Pardey Lukis, the then Director-General, said: "I resent strongly the spirit of trade unionism which leads many modern doctors to stigmatize all Vaids and Hakims as quacks and charlatans. We Allopaths are just emerging from the slough of empiricism. The longer I live in India, the more intimate my connection with Indians, the greater will be my appreciation of the wisdom of the Ancients and the more will I understand that the West has still much to learn from the East."

Other eminent observers also have spoken in a similar strain. Therefore, it is not for us to cut off from the past systems, but it is necessary to resuscitate them, to develop them. If we desire to do so, we cannot afford to keep out the Vaids and the Hakims. We cannot ignore them. It is true that the knowledge in those systems has been handed down from generation to generation in the form of *sutras,* which were committed to memory. The result was that the bulk of information was compressed into a small compass. In the process of transmission the links are gone, the original is mutilated, accretions have gathered and evidence or data on which the conclusions were founded are missing. What we are left with now are dogmatism and perhaps empiricism. On the other hand, if we regard medicine as an art of healing, who is there so bold as to say that this art is the exclusive achievement of one system. Considered thus the claims of those who practise not the Western but some other system of medicine to be included in the group of medical practitioners become almost irresistible. I would, therefore, desire to see the membership of this Association open to those who honestly believe in their own system of medicine and practise it with real sincerity.

When we organize or attempt to organize any group of people we do so both for the purpose of attacking and defending. Problems connected with the health of the citizens of this country, with the means of preventing diseases and the spread of epidemics, with the method of generating a sanitary consciousness amongst the masses of this country, are items which are to be attacked with determination, courage, resourcefulness, hope and faith. On the other hand, every one of us realizes that we, the medical practitioners in India, are the victims of circumstances and designs which are inimical to the growth of this profession and we have to defend ourselves against them. In the domains of medical education, medical research, medical relief or prevention of diseases, determined and systematic efforts have been made in the past to keep us in a perpetual state of inaction and stagnation. We are told that our education is defective, that we have no original research to our credit, that our ability to provide relief in diseases is of an inferior order, that we cannot administer institutions established for the purpose of affording such relief, that we cannot initiate and successfully carry out schemes for the prevention of diseases. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that this is so, it may pertinently be said, so far as the members who practice the Western system are concerned, that it is clear that the present unsatisfactory condition could be due to one of two causes: either the soil was so bad that no crop could grow in it, or the tiller was so careless or ignorant that he did not care, or he did not know how to achieve success in his work. But who are responsible for the training of our youths in medicine?

As far back as 1912 and 1913, the members of the Indian Medical Service gave evidence before the Public Services Commission that "the standard of medical education in India is low and that the Indian practitioner is unpractical, that the British schools are far more efficient than Indian colleges", and yet in the year 1913, out of 24 appointments in the Indian Medical Service, 8 Indians got in by competition, and in 1914, out of 35 such posts, 14 were secured by Indians.

We have been blamed because there is no record of research to the credit of the Indian medical practitioners. What is the real root cause? Are Indians incapable of research? Sir J. C. Bose, Sir P. C. Roy, Sir C. V. Raman and Dr Meghnad Saha have won world-wide reputations in

research without any guidance or tuition from Westerners. Why cannot the Indian medical practitioners equally succeed? To be successful in medical research it is not only necessary that those who are engaged in it should be provided with laboratories, but hospital facilities should also be secured for them. Till within recent years, all the larger hospitals in this country were manned by members belonging to the Indian Medical Service. All the research appointments were and still are being held by the Service officers. The process of exclusion has been so carefully, may I say shamelessly, planned and manipulated that even an Indian of established repute has no chance of getting into the group. As regards the management of large hospitals and institutions, the question of the inefficiency of Indians does not arise, because no opportunity is given to Indians to manage any of these hospitals. The indisputable fact remains that, in spite of such obstructive methods and in spite of the handicap due to paucity of funds, two large institutions, one in Calcutta and another in Bombay, have been developed and managed entirely under Indian supervision. It is a decisive argument against the charge of inefficiency attributed to Indians. Studied carelessness on the part of the I.M.S. officers in discharging the responsible duties cast upon them, namely, that of developing an Indian Medical Profession, the pre-arranged method of keeping the Indians out of every opening where they could develop themselves, is responsible for the present state of affairs. Knowledge gives vision to the blind. But perverse attempts have been made to perpetuate the infirmity.

Whatever may have happened in the past, we have now reached a stage when we, as members of the medical profession in India, desire to fulfil our mission, to develop ourselves and to realize the hope with which we adopted the career of a physician. We are prepared to profit by the knowledge of the West, but not under conditions in which it engenders hatred for what is Eastern. I am happy to say our goal is getting clearer, that our vision is getting less obscured, that our self-confidence is being restored and that the whole medical profession in India is being linked together by a common bond of faith and hope.

Most of us have been trained in the Allopathic system. Let us frankly admit that our teachers have not given us that broad outlook, that deep insight into medical lore which every teacher ought to inculcate in his

pupil. Why do I say that? There is a simple test. No professor belonging to the Medical Services has ever, to my knowledge, trained an Indian student in such a way that he may prove capable in time of occupying the chair of his teacher. It has all along been a process of safeguarding the interests of a trade union. In order to reserve the posts for the Services, it has happened that one and the same professor has taught such subjects as hygiene, chemistry, physiology, surgery and ophthalmic surgery at different periods of his service in India. We cannot conceive of a more monstrous method of imparting medical education in any country. A complaint was made by some I.M.S. officers before the Public Services Commission that in India specialization in any medical subject was unknown. Who is responsible for this? How can we expect anything else from these teachers who have developed only one form of speciality, namely, the speciality of possessing an overweening self-confidence, the speciality of rejecting all claims of the Indian practitioners to fair treatment, the speciality of belittling everything Indian. The irony lies in the fact that, while condemning the Indian practitioners, the I.M.S. officer forgets that he is condemning himself, that he is hoist with his own petard. We know we have been wronged in the past. We do not desire to depend on others. We, therefore, desire to utilize such powers as the Universities and the Councils of Medical Registration in different provinces have given us for the purpose of developing medical education in our own way. It is unfortunate that interested parties have clouded the issues by requisitioning the powerful aid of the General Medical Council and the British Medical Association in condemning our attempts at developing in our own way. The General Medical Council shamelessly rejects recognition of the Indian degrees, particularly those of Calcutta University, while they dared not do the same with regard to London and Cambridge Universities when they failed, even so late as 1925, to give the requisite numbers of 20 labour cases to each student before appearing at the examination.

Within recent times you must have noticed in the newspapers the attitude of the General Medical Council towards the Indian Universities. It is desirable that I should go into this question a little in detail in order to show what this attitude has been. Previous to the enquiry by the

General Medical Council, the appointment of the Public Services Commission in 1913 and the Medical Services Committee in 1919 afforded opportunities to the Indian Medical Service officers to condemn the Indian practitioners. Why did they do so? Did they forget that the I.M.S. had full control of the education of our youths for over half a century? The peculiar methods adopted by the General Medical Council in its enquiry regarding the medical education given by the Indian Universities cannot but point to one conclusion, namely, that the President and the Executive Committee of the General Medical Council had to a great extent been influenced in their decision by *ex parte* information obtained from interested sources and that they acted as partisans, not as judges.

I will quote examples in support of this contention. The General Medical Council opined in 1921-22 that the training in midwifery in Indian Universities was not up to the mark. Similar enquiries have been made with regard to examinations held by the licensing bodies in England. Dr Comyns Berkeley in his address delivered in 1926 at the Centenary Congress of Combe lying-in-hospital said that he had ascertained to what extent the Council's latest recommendations had been complied with up to 1925. He found that a large number of schools had failed to comply with the recommendations of the General Medical Council. What recommendations the General Medical Council made to the Privy Council one cannot say, but the fact remains that as a matter of 'public policy' no steps were taken against them, particularly against the Universities of London and Cambridge. It may pertinently be asked whether the General Medical Council recommended the withdrawal of the authority for holding qualifying examinations in the case of these Universities? If not, why not? Why was this differential treatment meted out to Indian Universities? Have the General Medical Council no control over the Universities in England? Is it not a fact that under Part (1) of the Act of 1886, the General Medical Council is to "secure the maintenance of a standard of efficiency in the English Universities"? Not only can the Council withdraw recognition of the degrees granted by the qualifying bodies, but they can also represent to the Privy Council the desirability of withdrawal from such bodies of the right to hold qualifying examinations. Why was it not done in these cases?

I will now quote the second example to show how biased the General Medical Council has been in its treatment towards Indian Universities. The Council has from time to time been representing to the Government of India and to the Universities that, in order to fulfil statutory obligations, they claim a right to send inspectors for the examination of the Indian Universities. They have actually inspected many of the schools and colleges in India. Instead of working as partners, with whom reciprocal relations had been established, they have been attempting to guide, control and direct medical education in India. They have examined the curricula of studies, they have commented upon the staff and the provisions for instruction in different institutions in India. When Calcutta University applied for recognition of its degrees in the year 1890 under the Act of 1886, Part (2), Mr Lyall of the Government of India sent back the application to the University asking "for details regarding the degree of knowledge and skill required by the statute for granting the various diplomas". The then Registrar of Calcutta University, Mr Nash, thought it unnecessary to enter into the details regarding the regulations, and he referred to the pages in the printed regulations where the syllabus was given.

The information obtained from the University Regulations of 1890 justified the recognition by the General Medical Council and the University was recognized on the basis of this application in 1893. After 30 years, the General Medical Council wrote to Calcutta University, saying "that from the information at present in its possession, the Council is unable to recognise for the time being the medical diploma or diplomas of Calcutta University". Did the Council communicate to the University the nature and source of such information which justified withdrawal of recognition? It is true that in the years 1920 and 1921 the Council wrote to the University asking for information regarding the training in midwifery. It is also true that the Indian Universities, in common with the bulk of the licensing bodies in England, had not enough clinical material for the teaching of midwifery in accordance with the recommendations of the General Medical Council. But there was no information before the University to indicate that the standard of training in subjects other than midwifery had so deteriorated since 1893 as to justify

an enquiry by the Council. When, in 1924, Colonel Needham wanted to inspect the medical examination, the University refused him the permission to do so. Four years before this, the University had to refuse the request made by London University to supply to them (the latter) answer papers, and other details regarding the matriculation examination, and so with regard to the medical examination also they could not do otherwise. What right had the General Medical Council to inspect the examination in order to continue the recognition? Were not the reports and the syllabus published by the University enough? Did they ask for more in the cases of Japan and Italy and Australia, whose degrees were also recognized under the provision of the said Act? New Zealand passed an Act in 1924, which laid down that no one was allowed to practise in that country unless he passed a qualifying examination held in it. This was done as a measure of protection against foreign competition. The General Medical Council wrote a letter conveying a threat of cessation of reciprocity with that country but had to climb down subsequently. They wrote to the Chairman, Medical Council, New Zealand as follows:

"The General Medical Council have no rights of inspection or visitation of examinations held outside Great Britain and Ireland, but in many cases, for instance in Australia, the professors and other authorities concerned are well known in this country and their records are sufficient to guarantee that the work of standardization they undertake will be well done. The Council examine the regulations of the several bodies and taking into account the standing of the teachers and examiners recognise themselves which seem to imply a standard of knowledge which is not lower than that required in this country."

In this letter the Registrar goes on to say that with regard to Italy and Japan also the Council recognize degrees given by the Universities in those countries after careful consideration of the regulations. What, then, can account for a different attitude of the General Medical Council towards Indian Universities? The reason given is that "the staff of many Universities is now largely composed of Indians of whom many have not studied outside India." This is a serious condemnation of the system which has existed in India under the control of the Indian Medical Service for the last sixty years.

In the recent years a large number of our graduates have gone to Europe, America and England and obtained distinction and high degrees. Could it be said that the standard of attainment of the average medical practitioner in India today is lower than what it was in 1893? I do not pause to question the motives of those who want to belittle the value of the degrees conferred by the Indian Universities today. New Zealand has broken off, so have Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick, etc. Where reciprocation ended, retaliation began. I find in this attitude of the Council a blessing in disguise. It has shaken us up, wakened us. We were lying stunned, hypnotized. We are now conscious of our helplessness. I trust it will rouse us to action. The withdrawal of recognition and the difficulties of getting into the colleges in England have led a large number of students to go to Continental Europe. When they come back they are naturally enamoured of Continental instruments, machines, appliances and methods. India imports about two crores worth of goods and stores. Who brings them? We. Who uses them? We. Situated as we are, we cannot retaliate as New Zealand has done. But, is it difficult to organize ourselves, in the interest of the profession, for the purpose of counteracting the malicious attacks on our graduates? Can we not withdraw in a body our orders on British firms so long as the present attitude continues? It is for you to consider this and discuss the details.

But mere retaliation will not develop us. We desire no interference from outsiders while we are setting our house in order. We do not want an Inspector sent by the General Medical Council, but we desire the fullest enquiry by ourselves into the methods of teaching in the different Universities. We desire the fullest co-ordination amongst them. We want to raise ourselves in our own estimation and the world is bound to respect us in spite of the detractors.

I now come to the subject of research. Sir Normans Walker, in his report to the General Medical council, said: "India occupies a prominent position in the matter of research. But it is greatly to be desired that research should be active in many centres, notably the Universities. Where the professors are actively engaged in research, the students' interest in work is similarly stimulated. Young graduates have opportunities at their doors instead of having to seek admission to the three or four existing research

departments. One hopes to see research extended in the scientific and medical laboratories at an early date." Major Bradfield was sent by the Government of Madras to the United States of America in 1921 to study medical instruction in that country. He submitted a report to the Government in which he says: "Excepting perhaps the Rockefeller Institute, research and education in America are very intimately connected. The organisation of research departments in India as a separate department is a great loss to the country."

These are the opinions expressed by prominent men. But what is it that the Government of India, we find, are anxious to do? It is suggested that an Imperial Medical Research Organisation, working in different parts of India, should be founded at Dehra Dun. Why Dehra Dun? It is said that Chandbagh is a property lying useless and this could be utilized. The same could be said of the Hastings House in Calcutta. I daresay there are hosts of similar other places in other big towns. How does Dehra Dun satisfy the test that the Government officials themselves have laid down, namely, that research and education should be organised together? It is suggested that the function of the Institute should be to serve as a centre to collect and bring into proper relations with one another the results of medical research work throughout India. It is further suggested that the Institute should be the centre for basic research work. I fail to see how the Institute is to perform its function up in the hills. Why not have the Institute situated at Lake Manas Sarovar? The intellectual isolation will be complete and meditation uninterrupted!

It is preposterous that a scheme should have been suggested of establishing a research institute away from the biggest centres of medical education, away from the colleges and institutions where the materials necessary for research would be available. If it was merely a place which would serve as a bureau of information the matter would have been quite different. But research in medical subjects cannot be efficient, unless clinical material is available. How will it be possible to find sufficient clinical material in Dehra Dun? I know that it is suggested that in this medical research department there should be 52 posts of which 32 should be reserved for the members of the Indian Medical Service and 20 should be open to non-I.M.S. as well as I.M.S. candidates. If, as has been suggested times with-

out number, the standard of education and qualification of the candidates trained in England is higher than those possessed by Indian graduates, why is it considered necessary to reserve a certain number of posts in this Institute? Why must they not be all thrown open to the most efficient candidates, particularly when the selection will be made by a body at present composed of service men? Is it suggested that the entrance into a service, which is after all meant as a reserve for military purposes, gives any indication of a capacity for research? The Britisher complains that communal jealousy exists in India. Why, one wonders, so much anxiety to preserve this communalistic feeling in the profession? Why this reservation of posts and emoluments? To an average mind it would appear that such provision can only indicate that the Britisher himself is conscious of his own inferiority and dare not face open competition. What becomes of his pride and boast that in India his attitude is one of absolute fairness. I hope that you will have no hesitation in condemning this backdoor-way of securing a few more lucrative posts for the members of the Indian Medical Service.

A few words about the Service. It is unfortunate that in this country men are not appointed to posts but posts are created for them. This system can be lucrative to a few but destructive where efficiency is concerned. It, however, causes far deeper mischief. The I.M.S. men receive big salaries from the State. They have as subordinates salaried men. Necessarily, the numbers employed in a hospital have to be limited on account of economic considerations. The salaried subordinates are entirely under the thumb of their superiors, not only with regard to routine work but also in matters which demand initiative. Their mental vision is restricted. It is thus that the I.M.S. men have secured a cultural conquest over their subordinates. But with what result? It is true that these hospitals manage to dole out medical relief just as the system prevailed in 1885. But is the staff sufficient to manage these hospitals on the latest approved system? Considerable clinical material goes waste in every hospital, while the bulk of our graduates are not allowed to take advantage of it simply because the State cannot pay them and the controlling authorities will not have them. India is said to be the land for research. But an insurmountable Chinese Wall has been built round every available centre of research and yet comes the thundering indictment: "Thou hast been found wanting."

There is, however, another aspect of the question. The people who come to the hospitals have a right to demand a full measure of attention and treatment based on the result of the latest scientific researches. The people have a right to demand that the students who are taught in these public schools and colleges should have opportunities of gaining experience and skill by being allowed to work in the hospitals. It is only necessary for you and me to get the people on our side and all will be well. I can assure you, gentlemen, the die is cast heavily in your favour. Awake, arise and march forward.

I have heard it said that the I.M.S. is a reserve for military service. I have seen the past and recent communiques of the Governments of India and of England. I have noticed that a scheme is laid down by one Secretary of State only to be nullified or superseded by his successor. We all know that promises made have been shamelessly broken. Let us not bother about them. Let us be content that we have wrested the bulk of the civil practice from the I.M.S. people. I do not wish to enhance the communalistic spirit in the profession, but while it is there, we should at least insist on the Indian units in the Army being treated by Indian members of the service. If it be conceded for one moment that the European needs his own countrymen for his treatment, may not 50,000 people insist on getting their own countrymen to treat them, unless it is maintained, as a famous Private Secretary of a famous Governor once said to me in discussing this problem: "We can manage to govern very well without the 50,000 Indians but not without the one European."

I now pass on to the third item with which I proposed to deal, namely, the fight against disease, the provision for medical relief and the prevention of disease. It is unfortunate and extremely sad that while during the last ten years the birth-rate in India varied between 35 and 39 per thousand of population, the death-rate varied between 26 and 32 per thousand. If we compare these figures with those of other countries, we find that during the same period the death rate in England has been reduced from 16 to 11 per thousand, in Germany from 19 to 11, in France from 20 to 17, and in Italy from 22 to 16 per thousand. Going into details we find that in England, in 1901, the death-rate from enteric fever was 11·3 per hundred thousand deaths, in 1926 it was ·9 per hundred thousand;

comparable figures with regard to tuberculosis came down from 174 to 96; and with regard to diarrhoea and enteritis, from 92 to 21. When we come to the preventable diseases in India we find that 230 persons per hundred thousand die of such diseases as cholera, small-pox, plague and dysentry. On the other hand, the infant mortality rate in India is as high as 250 per thousand births. In England it is 78 per thousand births, in Germany it is 132 and in France 103. A question, therefore, naturally arises, can nothing be done to prevent this enormous loss of man-power in India? For it must be remembered that although of those who suffer from cholera or kala-azar only a very small proportion may die, a large proportion is maimed for life. It is for you to come to a decision regarding the methods to be adopted for preventing these diseases. I do not have to go into the history of the activities of the Government during the past hundred years to show that we should not look to it for help and inspiration. If we mean to do anything we shall have to do it in spite of the Government. We must organize ourselves. Voluntary organizations have to be formed for social service, for giving aid during epidemics, for the medical inspection of school children, and for rousing sanitary consciousness amongst the masses.

I could deal with various other problems in which the Association may be interested: the training of Indian nurses for our hospitals, the adoption of steps to prevent the indiscriminate use of drugs and intoxicants, the question whether medical education should be of two grades or one, whether it is desirable to train students for the purpose of creating a public health service. These and many other problems will be before you for solution, either during this session or in the ensuing year. But there is one question which has often been asked and which I would like to mention briefly before I conclude. It has been asked whether a member of the medical profession should interest himself in any matter outside his professional life, whether this Association should take up matters which, in common parlance, are dubbed political. Gentlemen, I have very definite views on this question. In India, we have never regarded the various aspects of life as being in separate water-tight compartments: politics, technically so called, is intermixed with economic, social and medical problems. If politics means the science of organization for the purpose of securing the greatest good for the largest number, we, members of the medi-

cal profession, dare not keep away from politics. If by a "politician" we mean, in the words of Milton, a man of "cunning", our profession is too noble, too altruistic to allow us to be so. No, gentlemen, we have nothing to do with him. In the present state of your country, I entreat you to organize yourselves. In any steps you take, beware of pitfalls, act in an organized way, for let us not forget the famous words of Abraham Lincoln: "Brethren, let us hang together or else we may hang separately."

1929

From the *Bengal Medical Journal*, July 1962

Indian Medical Council and Medical Education in India

You elected me as a non-official President in October 1939 for five years. Last year, in April 1944, you re-elected me for another term of five years commencing from October 1944. While appreciating this renewed expression of your confidence in me, I felt that I should get your informal opinion on the proposition whether a convention ought not to be established that a non-official President should not ordinarily occupy the position for more than one term so that others might get opportunities of serving in that capacity. When the Council met in October 1944, you recorded your opinion that such a convention should be established, but you also resolved that I should continue to be your President for one year more in view of the work of the Bhore Committee then in progress. That Committee has now finished its labours and the period of one year is over. I felt, therefore, that I was free to resign my place: by doing so, I do not for a moment disregard your wishes that I should continue to be your President for four years more; I only plead that my action was prompted by your decision to establsh a convention, such as you indicated in October 1944.

Before handing over this office to my successor, it is essential that I should give an account of my stewardship and indicate to what extent this Council has succeeded in its efforts to secure "efficiency at home and honour abroad". In October 1940, I outlined the extent to which we had succeeded in our efforts during the previous five years, namely, from 1934 to 1939. I will now deal with the next five years. In order to secure and maintain efficiency in the profession it is essential that the right type of students with suitable preliminary qualifications are admitted into medical colleges, that the institutions have the requisite arrangements for teaching

From the Presidential address at the twenty-third session of the Medical Council of India. 23 October 1945.

and the right kind of teachers, that the examiners are suitably selected, and that periodical inspections of the institutions are carried out to check that the teaching imparted, the syllabus followed and the examinations held to test the students' capacity are of the desired standard.

As you are aware, we framed, with the help of experts and the Universities, the syllabus and the courses of study for the I.Sc. students in the basic scientific subjects, Zoology, Botany, Physics and Chemistry, so that the students who joined the medical institution after their I.Sc. might be properly equipped for medical studies. We forwarded these proposals to the Inter-University Board so that all the Universities might follow a uniform standard.

During the period of five years, we inspected in the different Medical Colleges in India, the courses of study and arrangements for instruction in the subjects of Anatomy, Physiology and Pharmacology, and also in Pathology, Medical Jurisprudence and Hygiene. We were particularly anxious to find out if these institutions were provided with a health museum, and if they had emphasized the teaching of medicine in its preventive aspects. Various inspections were held to enquire into the standard of examinations in these subjects and wherever they were found to be lax, the attention of the University concerned was drawn to it. With regard to subjects in the Final Examinations, namely, Medicine, Surgery, Midwifery and Pathology, this Council insisted on fulfilling the requirements for teaching them, it insisted on providing sufficient number of beds for students in medical and surgical wards, on arranging for a suitable number of labour cases and post-mortems. The Universities and Colleges have in every case accepted our findings and have tried to fall in with our requirements.

This Council further laid down the minimum qualifications necessary for teachers for appointment in a medical college or as an examiner in a medical examination.

The Council has taken powers to appoint Visitors in addition to Inspectors, in order that, in certain cases, members of the Council could visit institutions and Universities. Standard forms were drawn up for the use of the Inspectors, so that their reports might be standardized.

Thus, you will see that, within the last five years, this Council has taken

definite steps to raise the efficiency of our graduates. We trust that within the next five years the effects of these steps will be more manifest. Is it too much to expect that with the improvements in the standard of teaching and examinations, the medical alumni of the Indian Universities will be granted higher honours abroad, that with better facilities for research and better training they will necessarily secure, in foreign countries, better prospects in practice, in the field of research and in competitive examinations.

But this alone cannot satisfy our graduates. They desire that when they go abroad for higher studies and research or for practice, they should get ample facilities for both. To secure these, the Indian Medical Council Act provided for the establishment of schemes of reciprocity with countries outside British India.

As I have said many times in this hall, this Council does not possess a Register and in its attempts to establish schemes of reciprocity with other countries, this omission has always proved a great handicap. All we can say in reply to enquiries from abroad on this point is that Registers are kept by the autonomous Provincial Medical Councils and that they are, under section 12 of the Indian Medical Council Act, to recognize all the qualifications included in our Schedule, though they are not restricted to such qualifications. Even so, recognition of qualifications granted by other countries, and putting them in our Schedule can have no meaning, unless there is a Register, in which the names of the holders of such qualifications appear. In order to remove this defect, as well as to establish one uniform standard of medical education, the Medical Council, as you know, adopted a resolution in 1940 and forwarded it to the Government.

This resolution was passed by the Council with two definite objects in view. Many of the members of the Council had long observed that an anomaly existed in this country in having two different types of medical practitioners, a licentiate and a graduate. However much this system may have been found necessary for administrative purposes, it was clear to many of us that the system was archaic and had outgrown its usefulness. Human lives could be entrusted only to a certain type of practitioners, who had obtained suitable training for the purpose. Many of us are of opinion that this training could only be given in five years and not four. Even the

deputationists of the Licentiates Association who met us wanted better training for five years, so that there would be, in future, only one type of practitioners, namely, of the graduate standard. The Council therefore resolved to ask the Government to take steps to abolish schools and establish colleges instead. We further suggested that there should be an All-India Register which would record the names of the existing licentiates and would have, in future, one list of medical practitioners, a list of medical graduates. Incidentally, this will dispose of the objections raised by other countries to recognizing our degrees, because our Register in future would have only one and not two types of practitioners. As a step in the same direction, and in order to make it easier for the existing licentiates to become graduates, this Council decided to give them facilities during the period of war and for three years afterwards to get further training and appear for the M.B.B.S. degree in larger numbers; they asked the Government to provide facilities for such training.

No steps have yet been taken by the Government to amend the Act and to provide a Register, although most of the Provincial Medical Councils have agreed to our proposal.

On the other hand, when in 1936 the Council approached various countries for establishing reciprocity with them, four out of the twenty-seven countries so approached agreed to a direct reciprocity, fourteen agreed to an indirect reciprocity through the General Medical Council, while many did not bother to reply. This Council agreed then to a scheme of indirect reciprocity, thinking that something was better than nothing. But soon it was found out that indirect reciprocity like indirect registration, did not work, nor did they enhance 'our honour abroad'—indeed reciprocity implies that the two reciprocating countries will recognize all the qualifications borne in the Schedule of the Act of the respective countries. But in case of indirect reciprocity, the intermediate country comes into the picture. In such cases reciprocating countries, besides mutual recognition of qualification, have to recognize, in addition, the qualification borne on the Register of the Intermediate country. Complication arose, however, during the war and the years preceding the war. For instance, if New South Wales were to enter into reciprocity with India, through the General Medical Council, it would mean that India would recognize all the quali-

fications on the Register of General Medical Council as also on the Register of the New South Wales Medical Board and *vice versa*. We very soon found that this scheme was unworkable as each country had to adopt and follow its own scheme for medical practice, in order to avoid unnatural competition, and in doing so, clashed with the principles of reciprocity, particularly when we had to deal with not two countries but three.

This Council therefore adopted a resolution in 1940 which the Government of India accepted, abolishing the scheme of indirect reciprocity. The Council further resolved to ask the Government to explore the advisability of establishing a General Reciprocity Board affecting all the countries within the British Commonwealth of Nations. Nothing tangible has yet come out of this suggestion.

The reciprocity between the United Kingdom on the one hand and India on the other is governed not by any section of the Indian Medical Council Act, 1933, but by the Constitution Act passed by the Parliament in 1935. The qualifications granted by either of these two countries—for purposes of education and practice—can only be challenged by either the General Medical Council in England or the Indian Medical Council in India, in case a particular qualification recognized by one or the other of the Councils, is not of the requisite standard. You are aware the General Medical Council under this provision refused to recognize the Calcutta and Patna medical degrees for certain periods, although this Council granted them recognition and they have still not recognized the Andhra degrees which are on our Schedule, with the result that, although a graduate of an English university can practise in Andhradesha, a graduate of Andhra cannot practise in England, nor can he appear in higher examinations there, for which recognition of his qualifications by the General Medical Council is required. Faced with this situation, this Council felt that it should also possess the power of discrimination, and it asked the Government of India to amend the Indian Medical Council Act to provide rules according to which the Indian Medical Council might exercise the same powers as the General Medical Council and refuse to continue recognition of those qualifications in the United Kingdom or Ireland, which, in their opinion, are below the standard. Two such cases were brought to the notice of the General Medical Council, as far back as 1939, but having got no satisfac-

tory answer from them, regarding their standard, this Council recommended to the Government of India to remove these qualifications from our Schedule. Though the decisions of the Government are not known, the Council has indicated in unmistakable terms, its desire to perform its function without fear or favour. This is how attempts have been made during the last five years to secure, for the medical profession of India, 'honour abroad'. But you will surely recognize that political subserviency is always a definite handicap in our efforts at securing proper status for our people in foreign countries.

It is well known to you that, when we started our work in 1934, medical education in India was in the hands of the different Universities constituted by the legislatures of the respective provinces. These Universities laid down their own syllabuses and courses of studies. They inspected their own institutions; they held examinations according to their own standards; and they recognized the graduates after they succeeded in passing those examinations. When the Indian Medical Council started its work, we felt that the field of activity of this Council was like an unchartered ocean. We had no definite plans laid down. No co-ordination efforts had been made before we started working to get the standard of different Universities to the same level, and we were also conscious of the fact that any attempt which the Indian Medical Council made to level up the standards and make them more or less uniform, would be resisted by the Universities because they are sensitive regarding their powers. We had to go cautiously. First of all we laid down a standard syllabus and courses of medical studies; then gradually we began the inspection of medical institutions and had discussions with the Universities regarding the standard of teachers and examinations conducted by them. We have taken definite steps to improve the standards of the degrees granted by the different Universities and also tried to secure for them satisfactory recognition from other countries.

I hope and pray that my successor will be able to finish the tasks that await him and that he will increase the usefulness of this Council.

1945

NATION-BUILDING: PROBLEMS AND PLANS

If democracy is to achieve the good of a welfare state, every man woman child must participate in achieving it.

A house to live in, shall, if possible, be one which we have built with our own efforts. To rebuild India the approach is

B.C. Roy

Problems of West Bengal

Unemployment and Industries

Large-scale unemployment in the midst of increasing production may appear to many to be a paradox. For an explanation of this paradox we must analyse the basic nature of the socio-economic structure of this State.

This State has a large population of middle-class people who are very proud of their intellectual tradition. Consequently, they have a strong inclination for literary education and white-collar jobs, which brought them, in the past, their high social status and prosperity. For various reasons the ordinary Bengali also is somewhat averse to manual work. Our system of education and social environments are to a large extent responsible for this tendency. This inclination has created certain difficulties with regard to employment. With the advancement of technology and the development of the industrial mode of production, the demand for people with technical skill and knowledge, and a taste for manual work, has increased much more than for people who have general education and are willing to accept only white-collar jobs. There is thus an unfortunate disparity between the kind of employment created as a result of modern industrial development, and the kind of employment sought and preferred by most people of this State, particularly those who belong to the middle-class.

The unemployment problem is not new, but on account of certain socio-economic changes it has become acute in the recent years. Owing to various causes, such as the rapid growth of population, the Partition of Bengal, unemployment consequent on the mechanization of industries in its transitory period, etc., the general economy of this State has sufferred badly. The economic security of the middle-class people has also suffered

From Budget statements of the years 1954-55, 1955-56 and 1957-58 by Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, Chief Minister and Minister-in-Charge, Finance, West Bengal.

greatly as a result of the gradual disintegration of the joint family system and the general loss of their landed property. Almost every member of a middle-class family owned a house jointly with other members of his family, and had also some income from the jointly held property. All this was a security against his unemployment and sickness. But, with the breaking up of the joint family, this security has also disappeared. The Partition has greatly hastened the process. Many of the displaced persons from East Bengal are middle-class people who left behind all their properties without receiving any compensation for them. A large number of people in West Bengal also depended on the income they received from their landed properties in East Bengal. Because of all this, unemployment now is causing much greater suffering than what it did when its evil effects were to a great extent mitigated by the security and support of the joint family system.

Whatever may be the root cause of unemployment, its solution lies in the increase of investments. The Government are, therefore, increasing their investments in all fields within the public sector, and are also trying to create conditions which will stimulate investments in the private sector. But even increasing investments will not necessarily provide employment to the unemployed middle-class people so long as they do not change their outlook with regard to the kind of work they want and take advantage of the new kind of employment that becomes available to them. This problem of unemployment has, therefore, to be tackled from many sides.

We must, first, as far as possible, open up channels of employment in which our young people are likely to be interested. Secondly, educational system should be so changed that it is in harmony with the new economy. Thirdly, we must try to make our young people interested in diversified fields of economic activities.

In co-operation with the Government of India we have adopted a scheme of employing, in three years, 30,000 teachers-cum-social workers in the rural areas. We have actually made budget provisions for the appointment of 8,500 such teachers during the current [1954-55] year and 10,000 more in the course of the next. This will create an appreciable volume of employment, in which our young men are expected to be interested; at the same time this will go a long way towards providing adequate

education in the rural areas. We are also gradually giving a technical bias to our education by providing ever-increasing opportunities for technological education and technical training in more and more institutes and schools. And attempts to interest our young men in all kinds of manual work are being made through the National Volunteer Force.

West Bengal contains the biggest city in the Indian Union. Her mineral and industrial wealth is large. Her industrial activities are the pride of this country. And yet, paradoxically, the common man in this State lives in comparative poverty. The most essential social services he should be provided with cannot unfortunately be made available to him for lack of funds. Such facilities for education and medical treatment as are available to him, and the state of roads he has to use are far from what they should be. Yet the West Bengal budget remains unbalanced. Its revenue deficit is increasing. Why should this be so? Why should the common man not receive any benefit commensurate with the wealth around him, and why should the budget be still in deficit?

The answer will be found if we analyse the mode of distribution, according to the constitution, of the taxing power of this State with reference to its economic character.

As at present, the industrial wealth is practically beyond the taxing power of the State Governments; they are expected to live mainly by taxing the agricultural wealth. The predominantly agricultural States are therefore better off under this arrangement. Their revenues from land, forest and irrigation may not be enough to meet their requirements, but their revenues from tax receipts grow along with the development of their agricultural wealth. But the States that are predominantly industrial do not derive much benefit by way of taxing their growing industrial wealth, which is for the most part outside their taxing power. Although huge industries are situated in West Bengal, they do not yield commensurate revenues to the Government of West Bengal. The State of Bombay, being predominantly industrial, suffers from similar disabilities. But her agricultural wealth is also quite large, and in this respect she is unlike West Bengal. Bombay has a large territory with an extensive forest area, from which her receipts, by way of land revenue, forest revenue, etc. are fairly large and expanding. West Bengal does not get any such large

revenue from this sector. Her land revenue is small. She has no extensive forest for exploitation ; on the other hand, she has to spend much on afforestation. Having regard to the climatic conditions of this State, charges for irrigation water, increased irrigation rates or betterment levy cannot be expected to yield any good revenue. The agricultural sector of the economy of West Bengal is not only small but it is weak and moribund. West Bengal has thus a unique economy in this country, and her financial difficulties are also therefore unique. For her very existence West Bengal has to depend, almost wholly, on her industrial wealth and its expansion, but the State Government would not in any commensurate degree benefit from the taxes which such industrial expansion would bring. The income-tax levied on the industrialists, the customs and export duties on goods produced and exported, the increased realization from transport of goods produced by the industries, all go to the Central Fund, from which we get only a small share, which is not at all commensurate with the efforts made in this State for increased production and bigger industrial enterprises.

The prevalent phase of public finance in India began with the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms. It was under the Reforms that the taxing powers of the Centre and the State Governments were separated for the first time, and the provinces were made to depend mainly on the taxation on land. That this distribution of taxing powers was unfair to the industrial provinces was recognized by Mr Montague and Lord Chelmsford. They actually stated in their Report: "We have indeed been told that income-tax is only the industrial or professional complement of land revenue and that to provincialise the latter while Indianising the former means giving those provinces whose wealth is more predominantly agricultural such as the United Provinces and Madras an initial advantage over a province like Bombay which has very large commercial and industrial interests." To this their answer, however, was: "We admit that these arguments have force ; but we are not prepared to let them stand in the way of a complete separation of resources." Thus in their enthusiasm for separation of financial powers, they sowed the seed of financial disparity which has grown and assumed serious dimensions today.

The Meston Committee reviewed the whole position soon afterwards.

Being sworn in as Chief Minister of West Bengal on 23 January 1948
Governor C. Rajagopalachari is administering the oath of office

With his first Cabinet, January 1948

L to R sitting : Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, Governor C. Rajagopalachari, Naliniranjan Sarkar

L to R standing : Nikunjabihari Maiti, Prafulla Chandra Sen, Bhupati Majumdar, Rai Harendranath Chaudhuri, Kalipada Mukherji Hemchandra Naskar, Bimalchandra Sinha, Niharendu Dutt-Mazumdar, Jadabendranath Panja, and Mohinimohan Burman

Discussing the position in different provinces, the Meston Committee observed: "Bengal on the other hand has a low scale of expenditure and an inelastic revenue ; and it will receive only a very moderate start in its new financial career. But its size, intrinsic wealth and general economic possibilities prevented us from treating it more favourably than the other provinces in this category." The Committee forgot to note that the great economic possibility of the province was being put outside the taxing power of the Provincial Government which, with an inelastic revenue, was being called upon to eke out an existence by taxing the province's decaying peasantry and agricultural labourers.

The financial history of Bengal under the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms is a record not of any progress but of constant endeavour to balance the two sides of the Budget by rigid curtailment of expenditure on the one hand and by increase of taxation on the other. When the Simon Commission reviewed the working of these reforms it found that "Bengal lives largely on revenues from 'stamps' most of which arises from litigation." It also found that the percentage of increase in expenditure on Transferred Services between 1922-23 and 1929-30 was 86 in Madras, 82 in the Punjab, 30 in the United Provinces, 25 in Bombay and only 4 in Bengal. The Commission observed that "in Bengal the expansion of education and other services has practically ceased". The position became so acute in Bengal that something had to be done if a complete collapse was to be prevented. The Second Peel Committee of 1932 recommended that a share of the jute duty should be given to Bengal in view of her special difficulties, and a share was actually given in 1934-35 in order mainly to avert an impending collapse. The total revenue of Bengal had then gone down to the low figure of 9 crores only.

During all these years, the three important problems of provincial revenues, namely, the inelasticity of the provinces' revenues, the disparity in the position of the agricultural and industrial provinces under the pattern of distribution of taxing powers, and the special difficulties of Bengal due to her very inelastic revenue from the agricultural sector, engaged the attention of several expert committees, e.g., the Taxation Enquiry Committee, the two Peel Committees and the Percy Committee. As a result, income-tax came to be shared with the provinces to mitigate

the difficulties arising out of the first two problems, and jute duty came to be shared to mitigate the special difficulty of Bengal.

The House is aware how, after the Partition, jute duty has ceased to be shared and income-tax is to be distributed not on the basis of industrial production and wealth, but mainly on the basis of population. The partition has also brought about a drastic shift in the basic economy of Bengal. The industrial sector is now overwhelmingly predominant and the agricultural sector has become financially less important in the economy of West Bengal, and she gets little revenue from this sector. If the agricultural sector of undivided Bengal was weak, it is very much weaker today in West Bengal; for all the agricultural wealth of Bengal was in East Bengal. Her main source of revenue today is provincial excise and sales tax. Both have been exploited to the full and a downward trend has already set in. The present distribution of taxing powers has, therefore, become completely unrealistic for West Bengal. While the disparity between the character of her economy and her taxing powers has increased, the remedies, which were introduced in the past to mitigate the effects of this disparity, are no longer available. For the jute duty is no longer to be shared, and the sharing of income-tax is henceforth to have little relation to a State's industrial wealth. This has further accentuated her already bad financial position, and there is now little scope for making efforts on the part of West Bengal Government to get out of this position or to improve it.

Under the present mode of distribution of taxing powers, an agricultural State derives the full benefit of any expansion in the agricultural sector. On the other hand, the mode of distribution of the proceeds from income-tax is such that today an agricultural State derives almost all the income-tax receipts yielded by any industrial expansion in it. In addition, they also get a share of the income-tax yielded by industrial expansion in the industrial States. The extent to which the agricultural States derive benefit from industrial expansion in their own areas and in the industrial States was calculated by this Government in the Memorandum submitted to the Finance Commission. It was pointed out therein that, assuming that the ratio of income-tax collected in the different States had remained unchanged since 1948-49, the position in 1950-51 under the Deshmukh Award had been that for every one hundred rupees collected in the State, Orissa got

Rs. 617, Bihar Rs. 322, Madhya Pradesh Rs. 215, Uttar Pradesh Rs. 178, Madras Rs. 93, Assam Rs. 84, Punjab Rs. 71, Bombay Rs. 24 and West Bengal Rs. 21. Under the recommendation of the Finance Commission the position has moved further against the industrial States and in favour of the agricultural States. Thus an agricultural State gets the full benefit of any agricultural expansion in it, full benefit from any industrial expansion in it, as well as some benefit from industrial expansion in the industrial States. An industrial State, on the other hand, gets full benefit from the expansion of the agricultural sector, but very little benefit from the expansion of its industrial sector, and no benefit at all from the expansion of industries in other States. This Government is expected to live by taxing agricultural wealth, of which it has very little, but it cannot tax industrial wealth in which it is quite rich. As the agricultural wealth in West Bengal is very small for purposes of taxation, the position of the public finance in West Bengal is particularly unsatisfactory. This serious problem in public finance has become more serious and urgent after the partition and the recommendations of the Finance Commission. This unique economic structure of West Bengal is not sufficiently appreciated in the Centre or in any other parts of this country.

Two Paradoxes

The two paradoxes referred to above are at the root of most of the ills which today afflict the body politic of West Bengal. The first is the paradox of disparity between expansion and employment. The second is the paradox of the disparity between wealth and taxing power. In this State increase in investments does not proportionately increase employment for our young men. In West Bengal industrial expansion does not yield commensurate revenue to the State treasury. These two paradoxes stand in the way of our prosperity. For the removal of the first disparity, we must increase the adaptability of our young men to different kinds of professions, and they must be prepared to work in diverse fields, using their hands as well as their brains. For the removal of the second disparity, the pattern of distribution of taxing powers should be changed so as to make it realistic for the economic condition of West Bengal and for this we are looking up to the Taxation Enquiry Commission and to the Government of India.

These paradoxes are great handicaps in the path of our progress. In spite of all the handicaps we are going forward according to plan. We have in fact achieved more than we actually planned to. I am sure, with the support of the House and with the people of the State behind me, we will overcome all obstacles in the path of our progress.

Land Utilization in Bengal: Basic Malady

The area of the State of West Bengal is about 30 thousand square miles, of which as many as 20 thousand square miles or 128 lakh acres are cultivable land. 117 lakh acres or 92 per cent of the cultivable area is under actual cultivation and the remaining 11 lakh acres are waste land that can be brought under cultivation by development or reclamation. The ratio of land utilization is very high indeed. In fact, it is the highest in India. Such high land utilization has necessarily been at the expense of forest areas, so that today only 14 per cent of the total area of the State is under forest, whereas 25 per cent of the total area under forest is considered necessary to maintain its balance with agriculture. The House is aware how we have to expend money on the afforestation of waste lands in order to avert the sharply progressing soil erosion in several parts of the State.

According to the census of 1951, 57·2 per cent of the total population or 32 lakh families depend on agriculture for their livelihood. Of these 32 lakh families, 7 lakhs or 21 per cent of the total number of agricultural families are landless farm labourers. The remaining 25 lakh families are owner-cultivators, many of whom also cultivate lands under the share-cropping system.

It has been stated that for getting its bare requirements an agriculturist family of five would require at least 5 acres of land. If the 117 lakh acres of land under cultivation were equally distributed among the 32 lakh families depending on agriculture for their livelihood, the holding of each family would be 3·7 acres or, in other words, the entire rural population will go much below the subsistence level. Of the 25 lakh families of owner-cultivators, 8·65 lakh families or 34·5 per cent hold 8·8 lakh acres and the holding of each family in this group is below 2 acres. 9·05 lakh families

of owner-cultivators hold 28·9 lakh acres of land and each family in this group has a holding below 5 acres. Thus 17·7 lakh families or 70·7 per cent of the families of owner-cultivators have no economic holding today. Only 20 thousand families or ·9 per cent of the families of owner-cultivators have land above 33 acres each and their total holding is 10·5 lakh acres. It has been estimated that after the operation of the provisions of the Estates Acquisition Act, 3·9 lakh acres will be released to Government for distribution among the owners of uneconomic holdings. If this area is distributed only amongst the 8·65 lakh families who own less than 2 acres each, it will increase the size of their holding by less than half an acre each and 70 per cent of the owner-cultivators will still have badly uneconomic holdings.

Cottage Industries

West Bengal was once a land of prosperous cottage industries. There are many towns here which were the clearing centres of the products of those cottage industries. The cottage industries have lost their old vigour and the towns through which their products were cleared are decaying. The population of many of these towns is now smaller than what it was in 1872. The population is being increasingly thrown upon agriculture. This process is constantly reducing the size of agricultural holdings and when a man finds it impossible to live on agriculture he runs to Calcutta's industrial areas in search of employment and swells the rank of the unemployed. The extensive growth of the share-cropping system is a necessary corollary to this continuing expulsion of people by the agricultural economy and the failure of the people so expelled to get a firm foothold outside the agricultural sector making them anxious to stick to the ownership of the land. The system has grown out of the pillar-to-post existence of the Bengali. The rate at which employment-seekers are coming to the industrial towns is much greater than the rate at which the industries at the present level of investment can absorb them. In fact, statistics show that West Bengal is the only State in which the volume of factory employment has been decreasing for some years now. The result is an increasingly unemployed population. According to the sample survey of unemployment carried out by the Statistical Bureau in September, 1953, there were 4½ lakhs of unemployed employment-seekers in all the towns

of West Bengal. For every 100 persons employed, there are 27 unemployed employment-seekers in Calcutta. Among the middle-class Bengalis, for every 100 persons employed, as many as 47 are unemployed and seeking employment.

No blame can be laid on the rate of West Bengal's growth of population; for her rate of growth is now the lowest in the whole of India. Excluding displaced persons from East Pakistan, the growth of population between 1901 and 1951 has been 43·4 per cent in West Bengal as a whole and only 27·4 per cent in the rural areas of West Bengal. In some districts rural growth during this period exceeded half per cent per annum and in many it was much less. In some areas under several police stations the density of population was lower in 1951 than what it had been in 1872. The population of Calcutta which increased by 84·9 per cent between 1931 and 1941, increased by only 0·3 per cent between 1941 and 1951, excluding the displaced population but including all other types of immigrants. The figures of 1941 have been considered to be inflated but still the trend is highly significant.

A Problem State

West Bengal is considered to be a problem State. Its small area is very densely populated. It is painful to look at the map of this State, although, thanks to the reorganization of States, we have now a bare link between its northern segment and the southern segment, which were formerly disconnected. The State has started feeling the strain of the pressure of its population. The municipal area of Calcutta has by far the highest density of population in the whole world. The density is 88,953 people per square mile as against 13,463 of Bombay municipal area and 30,139 of Delhi. The density of population per acre is 139 in Calcutta, 47 in Delhi, and 21 in Bombay. It was calculated in the last census report that, considering only the built-up area, Calcutta has 370 persons per acre. The report states, "the thought of 370 persons jostling one another on every acre of land can be very painful indeed."

The existence of a large number of refugees in the State and the continual influx of more and more of them pose a special problem. This has multiplied the complications of our administration in all its aspects.

The size of an average economic holding in this State has been calculated to be five acres. In the areas of the State, more than 70 per cent of the tenant cultivators depend on holdings below five acres each. Thus only about 30 per cent of the families of tenant cultivators have any surplus after meeting their own requirements, and as many as 70 per cent of the families do not produce enough to meet their own requirements.

Industrial Sector

In contrast to this poor agricultural sector, the industrial sector of West Bengal is fairly prosperous. The benefit derived by the State from this sector is, however, not commensurate with the size and prosperity of the industries. This is due to two reasons. First, the people of this State have largely failed to secure employment in the various industries as skilled and unskilled workers; these jobs are occupied by people mostly from other States. Secondly, according to the Constitutional pattern of division of taxing powers between the Centre and the States, the State Governments are practically left with the power of taxing only agricultural wealth, the power of taxing industrial wealth having been allocated to the Central Government. Thus, the West Bengal Government has to derive its revenue mainly by taking agricultural wealth in which this State is rather poor. It cannot generally tax industrial wealth in which it is quite rich. This anomaly in the pattern of distribution of taxing power was sought to be rectified by the provision for sharing the proceeds of income tax. But the last Finance Commission, by fixing the distribution of such proceeds mainly on population basis, has accentuated the anomaly, rather than rectifying it.

Unemployment

The unemployment problem of this State is a matter of concern to everybody. The problem has been aggravated by the arrival, on a large scale, of refugees from East Bengal. If we analyse the unemployment problem, we find that there has been appreciable improvement of the position since the days before Independence, and that there has also been a change in the character of the problem; but the position is still quite bad. In those days before Independence, even first class M.A.s or M.Sc.s

were not always sure of finding employment. Today any honours graduate or a graduate with distinction or anyone who has passed the Intermediate or the School Final Examination in the first division can find occupation without much difficulty. Similarly, engineering graduates or licenciates in engineering can find employment with ease. In many sectors, particularly where engineers, overseers or first class or even second class graduates or even first division matriculates are required, there are often more jobs than men available. If we analyse the results of examinations in 1956, we find that in the School Final Examination 76,787 students appeared, among whom only 1,208 passed in the first division, and 4,961 in the second. As many as 24,737 students passed in the third division and 37,856 failed to pass. Besides, 8,003 passed in the Compartmental examination and 22 students passed in single subjects. The third division people, together with the people who failed, by far outnumbered those who passed in the first and second divisions, and the employment prospects for the former class are really poor. It is very regrettable that, while these people go about unemployed, practically all the skilled and unskilled workers required by the industry in this State are being recruited from other States. An equally regrettable thing is that, although there is extensive unemployment in this State, the Government do not find as many suitable men as they require for many jobs, and consequently many such posts remain vacant for long periods. There is, thus, a great maladjustment which has got to be rectified, if the problem is to be solved. It looks as if we have as many jobs as there are suitable men for them ; one of the reasons which is causing unemployment is that the men are very often neither psychologically suited nor trained for the jobs. As a result many vacancies remain unfilled and many others are filled by people from other States, while people of this State go about unemployed.

Backwardness

Ours is an under-developed country and the resources available for development are meagre. Under such circumstances, it is extremely difficult to determine the pace of development to be aimed at. Many people think that the Second Five-Year Plan is too ambitious, while others think that its aims are too humble. Both are probably correct. Those who think

that it is too ambitious are looking only at the resources readily available to us, and those who think that it is too humble are looking only at the great arrears in development that we must make up. This Plan has necessarily to follow a middle path. Nevertheless, it is causing great strain on our resources. At the same time it is not aiming at as much development as many of us would like it to. We must sacrifice today for a brighter tomorrow. It may appear cruel to expect a poor country to make sacrifices, but such are the unavoidable price that we must pay for development. If, therefore, the Second Five-Year Plan is causing strain on the economy, and the country is crying out to the people to make sacrifices, we must respond to the call cheerfully in order that the Plan may succeed. The sacrifice has to be made under a democratic set-up which is on its trial. I hope our people will rise to the occasion, and the Honourable Members will help the people by explaining to them the position in the correct light.

1954-55, 1957

Basic Considerations in Framing a Plan

Introduction

It is not enough to estimate the requirements of rural development in different spheres in terms of certain products which are ready for direct use. Such products are good seeds, fertilizers, improved implements, water supply, roads, facilities for education and health. We have to make sure that these are produced in the needed quantities in a steady stream. We are, therefore, compelled to calculate our requirements of measures which will produce such goods and services. Pedigree seeds call for special farms for raising the pure stock. The setting up of such farms involves the construction of buildings, the employment of trained staff and proper treatment of the soil. These, in their turn, generate demands for building materials, training facilities and various types of equipment. In the same way, teaching facilities will demand the training of teachers and the building and equipping of institutions for such training. The requirements of each apparently simple measure of rural development have thus to be traced back, step by step. We have then to make estimates of supplies currently available at each step and thus calculate the balance of need for which fresh installations will have to be planned. Such need, again, may prove beyond our present capacity in many lines. In that case, we shall have to turn back to scale down our immediate targets. Such is the nature of the exercise involved in planning.

The main purpose of the Second Five-Year Plan is, as has been indicated in these papers, to develop the country in a balanced manner. We cannot

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The papers published here explain the approach which the Government of West Bengal has thought fit to adopt in drawing up the outline of the Second Five-Year Plan of development of this State and were brought together in *Basic Considerations in Framing the Second Five-Year Plan* (Government of West Bengal, June 1955, to enable the public to know what is in the Government's mind even during the present stage of formulation of the Plan.

increase consumption without increasing production. It might be possible to increase production to a certain extent in this under-developed country by utilizing the idle man-power and machine-power both in the rural and urban areas. This increased production will naturally make it possible to increase consumption if the people have the means with which to buy the products. Therefore, planning should aim to increase the power and capacity of people to buy, i.e., to increase employment at the same time that production is increased. By utilizing idle capacity we may, without increasing investment, increase production to a limited extent in the first instance. This should be done.

The next problem that arises for solution is how and where to start building up the Plan. It has been suggested in these papers that we should build up from below. This has several advantages.

(i) The plan of development of a country and its people must be such that the common man realizes that the plan is being devised for improving his lot. He will then co-operate and contribute materially in labour and money to implement the plan. Experience has shown that among the villagers in India today, there is a great urge to alleviate their living conditions. They pay in cash or give their labour if they realize that the plan is for their benefit.

(ii) The total requirements in heavy capital goods or producer goods needed for the country are to be calculated by estimates framed on the basis of the plan for developing the villages and then working backwards. It would be more realistic than the plan-frame made by the economists and statisticians of the Planning Commission, where the targets are placed first and assessment of resources is made afterwards.

(iii) The extent to which consumer goods are to be produced, whether in factories or by village crafts, whether by the private sector or by the public sector, can be easily computed. There need be no compulsion to reduce consumption or to ration the use of consumer goods in order to develop heavy capital industries and factories for turning out producer goods.

(iv) Planning will be a continuous process, not merely limited to a number of years. It is therefore possible, if we build up from below, as suggested herein, to adjust the pace at any stage of development according to the expanding resources.

(*v*) The West Bengal Government, as its schemes will show, is fully conscious of the need to develop heavy industries and put up large-scale installations in many fields. It is no less concerned about the necessity of exploring all possible avenues for raising further resources for development through taxation. It is worth noting that the incidence of State taxation is already higher in West Bengal than in any other State in India, barring Bombay. Two facts must, however, be borne in mind: The installation of heavy plants must be linked up with the needs of the people. Secondly, taxation proposals in a democratic country must be such as will secure the largest amount of acquiescence on the part of those who will be affected by these proposals. Such acquiescence depends on the extent to which people realize that the Plan on which the tax-proceeds are to be spent is of direct benefit to them. It is interesting to observe that this fact is recognized by the Taxation Enquiry Commission which has recently submitted its Report. The Commission states:

"Very often, indeed more often than not, correspondence between taxes and benefits is neither direct nor obvious nor are the benefits clearly appreciated. If such benefits actually flowed from taxes, i.e., if the proceeds were in fact used for expansion of social services and economic development and if there were a clearer appreciation of this, taxable capacity would be greater. It follows that the limit of taxable capacity is relative to the purposes for which the proceeds of additional taxes are expended. Since psychological and political considerations mingle with the economic in the determination of such a limit, it depends to that extent on popular understanding and appreciation of the plans of development formulated by Government." (Report, Volume I, page 151).

The full range of measures calculated to arise out of the elementary requirements of rural development will provide the basic framework of the Second Plan. In addition to this, we have to have schemes in certain special categories to meet certain special circumstances of our case. In the first place, we shall have a number of schemes which were taken up during the period of the First Five-Year Plan and which will still remain to be completed. These will have to be carried forward to our Second Plan. Secondly, there will be certain major schemes, such as the Ganga Barrage Project, the Reclamation of the Calcutta Salt Lakes and the group of indus-

With Lal Bahadur Shastri

tries contemplated at Durgapur, which have a vital significance for the overall development of the State. Many of these undertakings would be also expected to yield a direct financial return. Although some of these projects are of primarily urban significance, they are, nevertheless, not without their bearing on the basic programme of rural development. But it is considered more suitable to deal with them in a separate supplemental group

The Plan for West Bengal is now taking shape out of all these elements.

A Note on the Framework of the Second Five-Year Plan[1]

Three papers have been circulated:

Recommendations by Professor P. C. Mahalanobis.

Working Paper by the Economic Divisions of the Finance Ministry and the Planning Commission.

Memorandum submitted by the Panel of Economists, dated April 10, 1955.

All these papers are in broad agreement about their general conclusions. All of them urge that we must aim at rapid development and, therefore, a bold plan. Every one among us would like to endorse that wish. We have a large leeway to make up in every sphere. Planning is a challenge to us to do this in as quick a time as possible.

2. The question is, what is possible? I am not one of those who are faint-hearted. But I believe in making a distinction between courage and unrealistic ambitions. One of the papers says that the outline of the Plan presented before us assumes a measure of effort which is both feasible and desirable. It will be desirable only if it is feasible. In my opinion, the Plan is unpractical both in regard to the total effort which is envisaged, as well as the manner in which this total effort is proposed to be applied in different directions.

[1] Presented before the Planning Commission when certain proposals about the Framework of the Second Five-Year Plan came up for consideration on May 5 and 6, 1955.

3. Very broadly, my criticism is that

a. the total strain involved will be beyond our present capacity to bear, particularly in view of the fact that the most important element in assessing this capacity in democratic planning is the willingness of different sections of the people themselves to undergo this strain; and

b. the different major heads under which this effort is to be made will lead to a lop-sided development, thus seriously injuring the prospects of balanced growth.

4. I set out these views more fully in the following paragraphs. Let me start by analysing the basic recommendations contained in the three papers.

Overall Effort

5. The statistical measure of the overall effort at which they aim is indicated in their estimates of increase to be effected in aggregate national income, investment and employment.

6. The rate of increase in income postulated is 5 per cent per year, or 25 per cent over the Plan period, from a total of Rs. 10,800 crores estimated in 1955-56 (at the start of the next Plan period) to Rs. 13,700 crores to be reached in 1960-61 (Mahalanobis, p. 21, para. 3·3). The actual income in 1950-51 was Rs. 9,190 crores and the rate of increase realized in recent years is estimated at 2·5 to 3 per cent per year, or 12·5 to 15 per cent during the present Plan period. This is to say, the present rate of increase must be about doubled (Panel Memorandum, p. 2, para. 4). Per capita income should rise from Rs. 282 in 1955-56 to Rs. 334 in 1960-61, i.e., by 19 per cent (Mahalanobis, p. 24, para. 3·3), after taking into account the increase in population.

7. So as to do this, the rate of investment is to be raised from the present level of 7 per cent of the national income to 11 per cent. Most of this investment will come from domestic savings (Rs. 4,950 crores out of Rs. 5,600 crores, the balance of 650 representing foreign resources—Working Paper, p. 50), raised mainly through steep increase in taxation (9 per cent of the national income will have to be taxed, as against less than 7 per cent now), one of the devices suggested being amendment of

the Constitution, Article 286 (3) to permit Sales Tax on essential articles (Panel Memorandum, pp. 6-7, para. 9), through deficit financing to the extent of Rs. 1,000 crores (Memorandum, p. 9, para. 11) and borrowing from the people to the extent of another Rs. 1,000 crores (Working Paper, p. 55, para. 12).

The total new investment over the five-year period would be Rs. 5,600 crores, of which Rs. 3,400 crores would be in the public and Rs. 2,200 crores in the private sectors. This implies that investment by the State would be double and by private enterprise 40 per cent more than what were envisaged in the first Plan (Mahalanobis, p. 19, paras. 1·1-1·3).

8. The increase in total employment aimed at varies from 9 to 12 millions over the five-year period in the different papers. The estimate which seems to be generally accepted is 152 millions employed in 1955-56 to rise to 163 millions in 1960-61, that is, by 7 per cent (Mahalanobis, p. 23, para. 2·1). It is recommended that the largest proportionate increase should be in mining and factory establishments, absorbing 42 per cent of the total increase which should occur (ibid).

9. It has to be submitted that the entire approach in these imposing calculations is an example of putting the cart before the horse. The level of our targets should be pitched according to capacity and not according to what we may wish for. How high we may aspire to reach in the next five years depends on how strong we are at the moment. The measure of this strength lies in the size of our *current* investible surplus. How low is our standard of living has been statistically indicated in one of the papers (Mahalanobis, p. 3, paras. 2·2, 2·3). This means that the margin of saving left after meeting the requirements of essential consumption at the moment must be very narrow. Most of our resources are used up barely to support life. If we take away a large part of them to invest in schemes which will bear fruit for direct consumption only after a long interval, there must be danger of damage through over-strain. This is admitted in one of the papers, which forbids any curtailment of consumption (Working Paper, p. 4, para. 2).

10. It would be possible to extract a large surplus without injury if it be squeezed out of the higher income groups only, without touching the lower strata, in a society with a grossly unequal distribution of wealth.

Our present structure of taxation and investment leaves little scope for that. The Panel of Economists has no illusions on this point. They argue for a "higher burden of taxation on the mass of consumption, which is by the mass of people" (Memorandum, p. 6, para. 9). This is inconceivable in a country where every adult has a free vote to determine the issue. This is also in direct conflict with the other injunction against depressing consumption, already referred to.

11. Another kind of argument has been advanced: "Unemployed man-power and unexploited resources can be brought together to increase both consumption and investment simultaneously" (Mahalanobis, p. 1, para. 3·2). Again, "in an underdeveloped economy, where there are idle resources, increased investment need not imply a reduction in current consumption" (Working Paper, p. 51, para. 6.)

12. There is a sense in which this argument is valid, and therein lies our principal hope for the future. But this sense is very different from the sense in which the argument has been used in these papers. Here is the truth in this matter: In the large-scale, organized sector of the economy, unemployed reserves of skilled labour can be put to work installed capacity of plant and equipment to the full without fresh investment. This can be done by working more shifts or taking over idle factories. Similarly, in the vast sector of small-scale and petty production, semi-skilled or even unskilled labour, now unemployed or under-employed, can be put to work available land and the existing hand-tools and craft-implements more intensively than such land or equipment is being used now. Then, in both sectors, more wealth can be immediately produced without first making an encroachment on current consumption for new saving and investment. Thereafter, this additional wealth can be invested in improving our capital equipment for increasing productivity further in a rising and expanding spiral.

13. These are the two main sources for acquiring new wealth in the beginning. The first is mainly urban and well-knit, therefore, more easily amenable to control, direction and pressure. The second is mainly rural, disorganized and diffuse, therefore, can be activated only when the motivation is self-impelled or spontaneous. The two sources are not independent. Continuous expansion of the urban sector is impossible

without rural prosperity, which provides raw material and market for urban products. Enquiries in knowledgeable quarters also reveal that the scope for obtaining a large production by working installed capacity in the major industrial undertakings like textiles, sugar, cement, etc., is quite small indeed.

14. There is one other possible domestic source of new capital formation. In recent years, particularly since our planned drive for development, there has been some rise in the national income. The increase has been from Rs. 9,190 crores in 1950-51 to an estimated Rs. 10,800 crores in 1955-56; in terms of per capita income, from Rs. 256 to Rs. 282, the percentage rise in per capita income being lower, on account of increase of population in the interim (Mahalanobis, p. 24, paras. 3·1-3·3). But not all the increment in the value of the gross national product has been in the form of directly consumable wealth; a considerable portion has been in the shape of dams, factories and other capital installations, which will take time to be reflected in a rise in the standard of living. Of the balance, a part has to be set aside for maintenance of previously existing capital equipment, and another part for the consumption requirements of the population increase which has occurred during the interval. Only the remainder represents the *net* addition to the wealth available for direct consumption and, therefore, the scope that exists for *new* saving and investment without further curtailment of the living standard.

We have no calculation of this amount, but it must be small. In practice, it will not be possible to appropriate the whole of even this amount for new saving, because the demand for some enlargement of immediate consumption, such as of food, will be irresistible. It would be also expedient to concede this demand in the interest of balanced growth.

15. The over-all size of the new effort which we shall be justified in attempting in the second five-year period ought to be deducted from the considerations set out in the preceding paragraph. The apprehension is inescapable that this must be very much smaller than what is envisaged in the three papers before us.

Pattern of Targets

16. All three papers are agreed on the manner in which the total proposed investment of Rs. 5,600 crores is to be allocated. Rupees 1,400

crores will go to industry, including Rs. 100 crores to factories to produce consumer goods, and Rs. 200 crores to household and hand-industries. The balance of the industrial allocation will be for the manufacture of producer-goods, e.g., iron and steel, heavy machinery, cement, chemicals, fertilizers, synthetic petrol, minerals and prospecting, aluminium and expansion of existing State enterprises (Mahalanobis, p. 19, paras. 1·1-2·1).

17. The next largest allocation out of the total investment will be to what is called construction, i.e., residential houses, schools, hospitals and public buildings. Rs. 1,350 crores are provided under this head, of which as much as Rs. 1,150 crores should come from the private sector. Electricity will take Rs. 500 crores, transport and communications Rs. 900 crores, agriculture and irrigation Rs. 950 crores. Buffer stocks will be built up to moderate price fluctuations and will require an investment of Rs. 500 crores (ibid).

18. What do these targets signify? Work worth Rs. 5,600 crores will be taken up, but consumable results may not be expected during the five-year period, except from a part of the outlay of Rs. 950 crores on agriculture and irrigation and from the investment worth Rs. 300 crores on consumer goods. Wages disbursed to workers in the non-consumer goods undertakings will need to be spent on consumer goods and will create a high demand for them. How is this to be met without a steep rise in their prices, leading to a clamour for a further rise in wages and thus to a vicious spiral of inflation? Are we to clamp down a Draconian regime of rationing and control in every sphere?

19. The strategy recommended to overcome this problem is to take the surplus away from agriculture and small-scale consumer-goods enterprise to meet the consumption requirements which will arise in the producer-goods industries. This is referred to in a vague way as a Common Production Programme in one paper (Panel Memorandum, p. 23, para. 30), but the other papers are more explicit (Working Paper, p. 12, para. 22 and Mahalanobis, p. 20, para. 2·9). This would ultimately mean forced savings through State bonds.

20. It will be impossible to apply this strategy for two reasons: The surplus which can be raised from the small-scale, hand-industries will be both small in quantity and poor in quality. These products cannot satisfy

the demand of the workers engaged in the industries producing capital goods. Then, again, neither the surplus of small-scale industry nor of agriculture will be offered for sale, unless those producing them can obtain such commodities in return as they value. In other words, we can lay hands on the extra production in the rural sector only to the extent we offer things of which the rural sector has most need at this moment, and for which peasants and small artisans will be prepared to work harder. Heavy capital goods do not represent such things and will not, therefore, act as a stimulus.

21. On the other hand, there is a way in which both agriculture and small scale industry can expand their output with very little call on new capital outlay at the start. The existing capacity of land and craft-equipment can be worked more fully to produce extra goods to satisfy many simple but pressing needs. Such extra output will not come up to the standards of city customers, but will fulfil many unsatisfied local needs. Local producers in different lines can be brought together, their mutual requirements can be ascertained and their extra output can be set off against one another.

This is a scheme which has been already put into practice during the last three months in West Bengal and has made rapid headway. The extra wealth which has been created in this way has meant saving of cash previously spent on purchasing similar commodities from outside. This new saving is necessarily very small and very local at the outset. But the way has been now found and the process has now started. And this cash saving is now being offered as security for loans to finance technical improvements in rural industry and agriculture, leading to increased efficiency and still larger, better and more diversified output.

22. The increasing financial requirement arising from such expanding village enterprise can be translated in terms of raw materials, semi-processed, standardized production ingredients, improved tools and equipment and cheap power. Continuing a process of back calculation, we can then estimate the supplies that will be needed of coal, iron and steel, yarn, machines for making tools, irrigation water, electricity and so on. Such supplies will have an assured market, because the surplus wealth coming from village farms and workshops will be willingly offered in exchange for

them. We can then deduce our targets for heavy industries also by working further back.

23. The demand filtering down from increased production in agriculture and small-scale enterprise will be the major determinant of targets in different lines of investment. This will not, however, be the only determinant. Labour engaged in making capital goods, in construction works, in transport, electricity undertakings, commerce and professions will also need to satisfy their consumption requirements. These can be mostly met from the output of factory-made consumer goods, because the crude output of hand-made consumer goods will be largely absorbed in the local areas themselves. Hence, the output of consumer goods in organized industry will also need expansion. Here, too, the beginning will be in fuller use of installed capacity. But continued expansion will demand new installations also, which will call for new capital investments in different lines. The demands arising in these spheres will also have to be taken into account in drawing up our over-all pattern of investment outlay.

It is only increased production which creates increased demand, and increased supplies can be planned only on the basis of such demand. In the beginning, increased production will have to depend mainly upon a fuller use of the existing capacity and only to a small extent upon investment in new capacity, because our investible surplus is meagre. Our ambitions should be abated in the light of these facts. The approach made in these papers will have to be radically altered and the pattern of targets set in them drastically recast for the reasons mentioned above.

Brief Directives for Drawing up the Plan Frame[1]

1. *Objective and targets.* The objective of our Plan can be only one and indivisible, namely, promotion of human growth, which means balanced development of all aspects of human life.

Increase of national income and solution of unemployment will be targets for achieving this objective.

[1] Summary Directives laid down for the guidance of different Departments in framing schemes for incorporation in West Bengal's Second Plan

[illegible]

Welcoming Sardar Patel to a public meeting at the Calcutta *maidan*

L to R Governor K. N. Katju, Sardar Patel, Syamaprasad Mookerjee, Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy

II. *Framework of targets to reach the objective.* Plan Frame should be sufficient to meet the above objective. That is to say, instead of laying down certain targets in an *ad hoc* manner, e.g., the number of steel plants, etc., to be built, we should derive these targets from the requirements of the basic objective.

III. *Starting base.* We start with the needs of the rural population, because

a. they form the majority,
b. they can provide funds for future development by small savings,
c. they can provide consumer goods through organized efforts in agriculture, cottage and small industries, and
d. if they are to be taxed, they will gladly accede if they realize the purpose is for their own growth.

We can see these expectations verified in our experience of the growing extent of people's participation in the C.D.P. areas and in Local Development Works.

IV. *Inventory of needs.* We begin with the agriculturists. What do they want?

1. More Production: Implements, seeds, credit, irrigation, materials for dams, fertilizers, further factories for production, if necessary.
2. Better Distribution: Transport—roads, railways, trucks. (Their manufacture requires some capital goods.)
3. Increased Income: Development of cottage and small industries. For this purpose: training of technicians, small plants, electricity, arrangements for provision of raw material, sale of finished goods.
4. Better Housing: Building materials, bricks, cement, corrugated or asbestos sheets, etc.
5. More Clothing: Spinning mills for yarn, improved handlooms, etc.
6. Better Living Amenities: Provision of household articles, furniture, cooking utensils.
7. Protection against Illness: Arrangements for training of doctors, nurses, midwives, buildings for hospitals, manufacture of drugs.

8. EDUCATION: Primary, Secondary, University, Technical: buildings and equipment for them.

V. *Matching with current capacity.* The extent to which each of these items can be satisfied in the next five years will depend on estimate of available resources. The relative emphasis on one or other of these items will depend on the employment potential of each.

The provision under different heads of development, particularly in respect of training facilities, should take into account the requirements of India as a whole, so that one State planning these may take into account the requirements of other States also.

1955

Approach to Planning

THE House will recall that in my last Budget Speech I made a few preliminary remarks about the approach to the Third Plan. At that time we had nothing definite to go by. Subsequently, the draft outline of the Third Five-Year Plan has been published by the Planning Commission and thereafter two meetings of the National Development Council were held. Although we were then groping in the dark, in retrospect it now appears that our thinking was more or less on the right lines.

The draft outline for India mentions a total Plan outlay of 7,250 crores in the public sector, of which the investment element would be 6,200 crores, the balance being current outlay. To this figure is to be added the investment in the private sector placed at 4,000 crores, making a total investment of 10,200 crores. According to the draft outline, the total outlay in the public sector was so distributed that the Centre's share was 3,600 crores, and the State's 3,650 crores. As will be mentioned later, these figures have changed subsequent to the meeting of the National Development Council in January 1961. It has been made clear that the principal aim of the Third Plan was to secure a marked advance towards self-sustaining growth. The draft outline postulated an increase in the national income of 5 per cent per annum. When discussing the question of raising resources for the Plan it was said that the objective was to raise the rate of savings from 8 to 11 per cent of the national income by the end of the Third Plan. The point I would like to emphasize is that the Planning Commission have expressly stated that, given the rate of increase in the national income of over 5 per cent per annum, it would be possible to permit consumption to rise at a rate of over 4 per cent per annum, consistently with the objective of raising the rate of savings. Thus, there

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From Budget Statement, 1961-62, by Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, Chief Minister and Minister-in-Charge, Finance, West Bengal. Figures mentioned in crores are rupees.

would be a significant increase in consumption and there was no question of depressing the current levels of consumption. The only curb imposed was to restrain the growth of consumption beyond the levels envisaged in the Plan.

The pattern of financing envisaged in the draft outline for implementing the various State Plans aggregating 3,650 crores required the Centre to contribute 2,500 crores, while the States were to raise 1,150 crores. The draft outline envisaged additional taxation of 1,650 crores during the Third Plan period. Of this amount, 1,100 crores would be raised by the Centre, and the States were expected to raise 550 crores in the aggregate.

This House had an opportunity of discussing the State's draft Third Plan towards the end of November 1960 and I do not propose to dwell upon the provisions made. I would, however, like to remind Honourable Members that in preparing this Plan special efforts were made to ensure that the planning bodies at the lower levels were engaged in the formulation of the schemes. Local schemes for meeting local needs were initiated and processed by planning bodies at the district and block levels, and sometimes even at the panchayat level. It will be recalled that last year I had mentioned the pressing need of increasing food production. This need is reflected in the very large provision made in the draft Plan of the State for agricultural production and minor irrigation, which together claim 61·01 crores. I would only add that in making the provision we were guided by the advice of an expert committee consisting of eminent scientists and others in formulating our schemes for increasing food production. We realize that with increasing industrialization there must be an increase in the marketable surplus of agricultural products. Such an increase is essential both to the maintenance of supplies of agricultural produce to old-established urban areas, such as Calcutta, and to the new and expanding urban areas such as Durgapur and Asansol, as also to the general economic well-being of the surrounding rural areas. Since the House discussed the State's draft Plan there has been one change of some significance. We have decided to include within the Plan, by readjustment, a sum of 10 crores as our contribution towards the development of Calcutta and the solution of its problems. I would like to take this opportunity of expressing our appreciation to the World Bank Mis-

sion for focussing attention on Calcutta's problems. Their forthright and incisive comments greatly helped in drawing attention to the urgency of the matter and in creating a proper awareness of the situation both in the Planning Commission and in the country.

It will be recalled that the draft Third Plan for the State envisages a total outlay of 346 crores, including 5 crores for the Damodar Valley Corporation. The question naturally arises, how are resources to be found for implementing a Plan of these dimensions. A detailed examination of the State's own resources were made by the officials of the Planning Commission, together with our officials. At that time it was only possible to work on the basis of the budget estimates of 1960-61, which, in turn, were mainly based on the actuals of 1958-59. On the existing level of taxation, and after projecting the Budget Estimates of 1960-61 with some allowance for growth, the State's resources were estimated at 19·73 crores. No credit was, however, taken for receipts from, or depreciation fund accumulations on account of, the Third Plan schemes executed either by the State Government or the statutory bodies, such as the State Electricity Board. Resources of this character would, however, be available. The figure of 19·73 crores was arrived at after meeting the committed expenditure during the Third Plan period on schemes completed during the First and Second Plans, totalling in all about 101 crores. Account was also taken of repayments of loans falling due, including 54·25 crores for Central loans. The Planning Commission further intimated that, of the resources expected to be raised by additional taxation during the Third Plan period in the State sphere, assessed at 550 crores, West Bengal's share would be 40 crores. Taking this figure into account, total resources at this stage were thus estimated to be of the order of 60 crores.

It was in this context that discussions with the Planning Commission were held in October 1960. At the meeting I drew attention to certain guiding considerations, besides population and area, which the Planning Commission themselves had laid down to determine the priority that was to be accorded for inclusion of schemes within the State Plan. The *first* criterion laid down was that provision should be made for the completion of projects already under execution at the end of the Second Plan. Our draft Plan includes spillover expenditure from the Second Plan to the

Third Plan amounting to 49·35 crores. Some of the schemes covered by this criterion are the proposed fertiliser factory, the gas grid, the extension of the Durgapur Thermal Power Station and the doubling of the Durgapur Coke Ovens. It stands to reason that since these schemes have already been started, or contracts have been entered into, they should be completed and made productive with the greatest despatch. The *second* criterion laid down by the Planning Commission was that provision should be made for expenditure needed for securing full benefits of assets and services already created. Most of the schemes which I have just mentioned fulfil this criterion as well, as they are necessary for the proper utilization of the various by-products at Durgapur. Another new scheme to satisfy this criterion was the Krebbs chemical by-products scheme, which is to be integrated with the proposed Durgapur Fertilizer Project. *Thirdly*, the Planning Commission stressed the need for speedy increase in agricultural production and expansion of employment opportunities. I have already mentioned about the provisions made for increasing agricultural production. I would only add that the setting up of the fertilizer factory would also qualify under this criterion, as it is essential for increasing food production in West Bengal. In fact, our full requirements of fertilizers are never met by the Government of India. With a view to developing village and small-scale industries, a provision of 10·59 crores has been made. These industries are labour intensive and are designed specifically to ease unemployment. We also hope that the development of the Durgapur group of industries will in itself give a fillip to the development of small industries in its immediate vicinity, and will provide a source of livelihood for an increasing number of persons. With this end in view we have already taken up the development of an extensive area in the vicinity of Durgapur. *Fourthly*, the Planning Commission have stated that, among the social objectives, one imperative is the fulfilment of the target for free and universal education for the age group 6 to 11. The provision for education is 48 crores. This includes the State's contribution of 7·50 crores for the Centrally sponsored scheme designed eventually to secure free and compulsory primary education. The outlay for education is essential to balanced development in all sectors, including technical education. *Fifthly*, the Planning Commission

stated that high priority should be given in the State Plans to power schemes, both to facilitate general industrial development and also to meet the requirements of major industrial targets and programmes. The total provision for power in the State Plan is 50·4 crores. This figure is the minimum required. In fact, a load survey carried out by the C.W.P.C. had indicated that failure to instal the power generating capacity proposed at Bandel and Durgapur would result in a power shortage. Compared with other States, the proposed outlay on power in West Bengal is modest and any reduction will jeopardize industrial development in a vital area. *Sixthly,* the Planning Commission mentioned, that sectors, which had lagged behind relatively during the Second Plan, should be identified and special attention should be given to them by way of larger allocations, of course, with due regard to their overall importance for the Third Plan. A Statewise examination of the *per capita* outlay in the Second Plan shows that West Bengal ranks only ninth amongst all the States. The West Bengal figure is Rs. 60 per head, while that for the Punjab with the highest *per capita* outlay is Rs. 101. Even Orissa spent Rs. 68 per head. Within West Bengal, too, there are certain sectors where development has lagged behind, e.g., in the slums and *bustees* of Calcutta and its surroundings. Provisions totalling 21 crores have been made in the Third Plan for schemes which are designed to improve living conditions. *Finally,* the Planning Commission has drawn attention to conservation of resources and to schemes for drainage, soil conservation and afforestation. The draft Plan of the State provides 4·70 crores for soil conservation. The salt lake reclamation scheme and several other drainage schemes also have these objects in view.

These points were placed before the Planning Commission in October 1960 and I mentioned that the draft Plan for West Bengal, which had already been pruned by us to the figure of 341 crores, was the irreducible minimum required to meet the essential needs of a State which had suffered, and was still suffering, from the after-effects of war, famine and partition.

The Planning Commission gave us to understand that in their estimate it would be possible for us, for the implementation of the State Plan, to contribute from our own resources about 90 crores only after taking into account additional taxation during the Third Plan period. We informed

the Planning Commission that we were prepared to contribute 90 crores, and, if necessary, more, but the Planning Commission on their part should state what Central assistance could be expected. They told us that whatever criterion was applied to West Bengal, Central assistance would not normally exceed 140 crores, compared with what had been allotted to other States. In view, however, of the special circumstances prevailing in this State, the Planning Commission were prepared to go up to a maximum of 160 crores. The Planning Commission mentioned that this was the maximum that could be agreed to. Meanwhile, further discussions between the Planning Commission and other State Governments were taking place and we came to know of the arrangements made with them. The Planning Commission also suggested that the West Bengal State Plan should be limited to the resources in sight, viz., our contribution of 90 crores and Central assistance of 160 crores, making 250 crores in all.

The revised estimates of resources to be raised by the State were placed at 93 crores taking the actuals for 1959-60 and the latest trends of receipts into account, as also the anticipated proceeds from the Third Plan schemes. We pointed out to the Planning Commission more than once that a Plan of the size of 250 crores was inadequate for the State. The actual outlay on the First Plan, if the D.V.C. and certain other schemes are considered, and the estimated outlay on the Second Plan for West Bengal have remained almost the same. If an outlay of 250 crores is adopted for the Third Plan, then the increase of the Third Plan's outlay over the Second's in West Bengal will be 58·5 per cent only. This increase would compare very unfavourably with the increases permitted by the Planning Commission for other States, namely: 73 per cent for Andhra, 86 for Assam, 77 for Bihar, 95 for Kerala, 91 for Madras, 90 for Maharastra, 124 for Rajasthan, and 96 for U.P. Only the States of Gujarat (56·6 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (57·9 per cent) and the Punjab (42·8 per cent), another partitioned State, have fared worse than ourselves. We stated that West Bengal should not be condemned to stunted growth, particularly when it had paid the price of Partition for achieving freedom.

With regard to Central assistance, we showed that some other States had been treated more favourably in that the Central assistance provided, in rupees for each rupee raised by the State itself, was higher than in our

At Dandakaranya, with refugees from East Pakistan, in 1959

Escorting Bangabala Devi, widow of H. C. Mookerjee, Governor of West Bengal, to her illustrious husband's last resting-place, 1956.

case. While West Bengal received by way of Central assistance 1·78 rupees for each rupee it raised, Andhra received 1·9 rupees, U.P. 2·4 rupees, Bihar 1·8 rupees, Madhya Pradesh 2·2 rupees, Rajasthan 1·9 rupees and Madras 1·9 rupees. Only in the cases of the former State of Bombay, the Punjab and Mysore was the ratio lower than in our case. Bombay is indisputably the commercial capital of the country, and is in a class apart. The Punjab was able to attain the highest *per capita* outlay in India during the Second Plan. Significantly enough, both Madras and U.P., which may be considered to be progressive and advanced States, received higher proportionate Central assistance than West Bengal, though both these States were not recommended grants-in-aid by the Second Finance Commission owing to their relatively easy financial position. Both by correspondence and verbally, I have asked the Planning Commission to enunciate the principles they had adopted in apportioning the Central assistance to the various States for their respective Plans and to clarify the considerations that weighed with them in arriving at the present decisions. But we received no reply. I need hardly labour the point that planning, and more so, the implementation of the Plans, is a co-operative venture. The very basis of this co-operation is mutual trust and confidence. I have little doubt that this mutual trust and confidence, so essential to the success of the Third Plan, will be strengthened and invigorated if the Planning Commission were to make a full disclosure of how the Central assistance for each State was determined. I am making this statement in the House because the present is the first occasion when the Planning Commission has come forward and given an indication of the likely Central assistance over the entire Plan period for each State.

Our request to the Planning Commission was that the size of the Third Plan should not inevitably be limited to the aggregate resources in sight. Such a Procrustean approach may be inappropriate, because of the many uncertainties. To begin with, there are inherent uncertainties in estimating the resources over a period of five years. At the National Development Council meeting of January 1961, I cited the instance of our State's share of the income tax receipts going up this year by about 3 crores owing to a difference in the estimates at the Budget and the Revised stages of the current year. This single item, when projected over a five-year period,

would result in an increase of our resources by 10 to 12 crores. There is no guarantee that similar other instances may not occur. Besides, I pointed out that in the absence of the recommendations of the Third Finance Commission it would be difficult to make an accurate assessment of the financial resources. I had, therefore, pleaded for flexibility and said that we should maintain a gap between the resources in sight and the Plan outlay based on the minimum needs. Should resources ultimately not be forthcoming, it would always be open to us to reduce the Plan outlay. There was nothing novel in the suggestion, because both in the First and the Second Plans, uncovered gaps between the resources and the proposed outlays were allowed to remain at the initial stage—to be closed during actual performance.

It is interesting to note that the National Development Council in effect accepted this position, when they took the step of laying down two sets of figures for the outlay on the Third Plan. The Council envisaged that the total outlay relating to the physical programmes to be included in the Third Plan might be of the order of 8,000 crores. Within this figure would be included an outlay of 3,847 crores for the Plans of all the States. The Central assistance for the State Plans was estimated at 2,431 crores. The National Development Council, however, recognized that the estimated resources were insufficient to cover the outlay proposed. A financial limit was, therefore, placed for the present at 7,500 crores, of which 3,725 crores would be available for the Plans of the States. Central assistance was estimated at 2,375 crores and the States' resources at 1,350 crores. It appears to us that certain imponderables loomed large before the National Development Council and the Planning Commission in arriving at what is clearly a compromise. One of the factors was the uncertainty of the external assistance that would ultimately be forthcoming. It was also hoped that in agriculture, small industries, social services and co-operation, there would be scope for attracting a great deal of local community effort and public participation. To digress slightly, even with a figure of 2,375 crores as Central assistance, West Bengal could reasonably expect 173 crores if the assistance were to be apportioned between the States strictly on the basis of population. Correspondingly, if the higher figure of Central assistance mentioned above, viz., 2,431 crores, were to be similarly

apportioned, we would be entitled to 177 crores. Normally, the population basis is unfavourable to us, but we are forced to accept this basis when the divisible taxes are shared. In this case, however, the Central assistance promised, i.e., 160 crores, is less even than what would have been our due, strictly on the basis of population.

The flexibility introduced by the National Development Council and the emphasis placed on annual plans as instruments for the implementation of the Plan as a whole suggest a pragmatic approach. In view of the many uncertainties, and the considerable margin of error when projecting estimates over five years, such an approach has much to commend it. As the Planning Commission have stated, the Five-Year Plans, and plans covering longer periods, provide a general perspective which has to be readjusted and translated from stage to stage into definite goals and targets.

There was no reason why the West Bengal Government should not raise its own resources beyond the level of 90 crores, and it was agreed at Delhi that, if a higher level of resources were available, the outlay on the basis of the physical targets might be higher. This can only be decided when the annual plans are laid down.

The National Development Council meeting resulted in a further gain. For the first time the Planning Commission made a clear statement that some provision would be made for meeting the problems of Calcutta. The Hon'ble Prime Minister mentioned that the problems of Calcutta were not only those of West Bengal but of the whole of India and he added that the conditions in Calcutta could not be duplicated elsewhere in the country.

Immediately after the National Development Council meeting I had further discussions with the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission. I was told that the Planning Commission contemplated allotting some funds for the schemes relating to Calcutta and this sum would be in addition to the Central assistance promised for the West Bengal State Plan.

The Third Finance Commission

Honourable Members are doubtless aware that the Third Finance Commission has been set up. We had the privilege of welcoming them in our midst and showing them some of the development schemes in West Bengal. I also had the privilege of having informal discussions with them. The functions of the Finance Commission are really threefold:

1. To make recommendations regarding the distribution between the Union on the one hand, and all the States on the other, of the net proceeds of the divisible taxes, e.g., income tax and Central excise duties.

2. To make recommendations regarding the allocation of the States' share as between the different States.

3. To recommend the principles which should govern the grants-in-aid of the revenues of the States that are in need of assistance.

The Constitution lays down fairly rigidly the respective responsibilities of the Union and of the States. The responsibilities of the Centre include external affairs, defence, railways, shipping, etc. In peace time these functions are not unduly expensive. The functions allotted to the States include such nation-building activities as education, communications, agriculture, development of water resources and power. In the context of general economic advancement these activities call for heavy expenditure. Further, the States are responsible for the maintenance of law and order, which are the basis of good Government and progress. While allocating functions, the Constitution also allocates the respective taxing powers. Most of the expanding sources of revenue, such as income-tax, corporation tax, Central excise duties and customs duties, have been allotted to the Centre. The States have to be content with land revenue, stamps, taxes on agricultural income and taxes on luxuries and entertainments. These sources of revenue are relatively inelastic. The only really expanding source of revenue allotted to the States is the sales tax.

As a consequence, there is an imbalance between the States' revenue resources and their needs. While the States' needs verge on the insatiable, their resources are exiguous. On the other hand, the Centre's resources leave it with a surplus for devolution to the States. The pattern I have just described will be evident from the fact that the Centre's resources for

the Third Plan at the stage of the draft outline have been placed at 6,050 crores, whereas the outlay in the Central sector is only 3,600 crores. Correspondingly, the outlay in the State sector was placed at 3,650 crores, though the resources were only 1,200 crores. The same picture was aparent in the Second Plan, where the aggregate cost of States' Plans amounted to 2,102 crores, but their resources were estimated at only 822 crores.

The Constitution-makers were fully aware that such an imbalance was likely to occur. It was to correct this imbalance that an impartial statutory body in the shape of the Finance Commission was set up to recommend the devolution of divisible taxes to the States, and also to recommend grants-in-aid for those States which were in need of assistance. A distinction, to my mind, has to be drawn between the State's share of a divisible tax, such as the income tax, and a grant-in-aid. The State's share of a divisible tax is the revenue which properly belongs to the State and which it can claim *as of right*. The State does not depend upon the bounty of the Centre for this revenue. The reason for having a divisible tax is to facilitate collections. A grant-in-aid, on the other hand, is to be made by the Centre according to the needs of a State, and is discretionary.

The Finance Commission might examine what are the actual needs of the Centre, depending upon the functions it is called upon to discharge by the Constitution. So much, and so much *only*, should be retained by the Centre as is necessary to discharge those functions, and the rest should be treated as surplus available for distribution to the States. To my mind, this is the clear import of the first function of the Commission. It is significant that in the last few years there has been a rapid increase in the expenditure of the Central Government on nation-building and social service activities. Such expenditure rose from 78·3 crores in 1954-55 to 302·5 crores in 1960-61. The draft outline indicates that during the Third Plan period 175 crores will be spent, on agriculture, minor irrigation and community development, and 300 crores on social services by the Centre. The Constitution provides that agriculture and social services, such as education and public health, are matters for which the States are responsible. It would lead to more effective utilization of the limited resources, if the funds earmarked for these heads were spent by the State Governments direct. After all, the State Governments are the more conversant with the needs

and requirements of their respective areas than the Central Government, and I only ask that the former should be the final arbiters as to how these funds are to be spent in the discharge of the obligations entrusted to them by the Constitution. It would be wasteful for the Centre also to set up similar organizations for reaching various social services to the people.

Coming now to the second function of the Commission, I propose to say little at this stage. We in West Bengal have consistently advocated the collection criterion. Whatever the criterion that is adopted, it will, however, have to be assured that the total transfer of funds to the States is adequate for the discharge of the States' responsibilities in a proper manner. The second function to my mind cannot be divorced from the third function, for ultimately it is the total amount made available to a State that is significant. The third function necessitates an assessment of the needs of a State.

Over the years a tendency has grown of assessing the needs more or less mechanically, and thereafter distributing revenues on a *per capita* basis. We feel that this emphasis on population may be misplaced and may create anomalies in the guise of equality. The problems of States, which are becoming increasingly industrialized, have not been given the attention and the consideration that they deserve, and we earnestly hope that the Third Finance Commission will do so now. Certain geographical factors have resulted in the setting up of industries in and around the Port of Calcutta. Certain other factors, including the availability of water and coal, have led to the rapid development of the Asansol-Durgapur areas. These areas are attracting other industries and are fast developing. Industrialization and urbanization, however, bring in their trail heavy responsibilities. Roads have to be constructed, hospitals, schools and colleges have to be opened, civic amenities, such as water-supply and sewerage, have to be provided. Establishing new industries and expansion of the existing ones make heavy demands on the State Governments for the supply of electrical energy, and these demands have to be met to make possible the fulfilment of industrial programmes laid down by the Centre. Further, the State Governments have to incur increasing liabilities for the maintenance of law and order, and for the policing of the new industrial areas. With rapid growth and heavy influx of population, old-established cities are

clamouring for improvement. Slum clearance and housing are almost prohibitively costly because of high land prices and resettlement problems; yet such schemes have to be executed under pressure of compulsive circumstances. Maintenance of these services and the discharge of these obligations cost much more per head in urban areas than in rural areas. While the liabilities of the State Government increase, the tax proceeds from the growing industrial sector go to the Centre in the form of income tax, corporation tax and excise duties. Since the State's shares of these taxes are mostly apportioned on a *per capita* basis, we get back little, the bulk going to other States. These are the anomalies of distributing taxes on a *per capita* basis. As a consequence, we are unable to meet the needs of the industrial areas for social services and civic amenities.

The powers vested in the State Government by the Constitution to tax industrial wealth are strictly limited and only touch the fringe, e.g., by levy of electricity duty. Further, certain State taxes, such as the sales tax, are subject to restrictions imposed by Central legislation, e.g., the rate on "declared" goods cannot exceed 2 per cent of the sale price. We feel that the Third Finance Commission should consider these hurdles placed by Central legislation in the way of the State Government's raising additional resources on its own, and should make transfers of revenues accordingly. Enough must be given to industrialized States to enable them to discharge their functions efficiently. The resources made available must continuously match the demands made upon them by industrial and other developments both in old and in new urban areas.

It is often argued that steps should be taken to reduce regional disparities in development. As a corollary it is said that the so-called advanced States should not receive the same assistance from the Centre as the so-called backward States, and that some weightage should be given to the latter. While it is conceded that nothing should be consciously done to aggravate existing inequalities, it cannot be said that levelling up of various regions at all costs is in the interest of rapid development or in the interest of the people who are the ultimate consumers. If increased industrialization and increased productivity are the primary goal, then it follows that the natural resources, the skilled manpower and the capital readily available in a particular area should be fully harnessed so as to obtain from them, in the

shortest possible time, the maximum benefits. Normal economic forces should be allowed free play to determine the growth of industries. Diversion of resources from the naturally favourable areas to other less favourable areas by artificial means is fraught with the risk of reducing the total output, delaying production and increasing the cost of the end products. We hope that the Finance Commission will attach due weight to the problem of rapid development, to the maximum utilization of available facilities, and to the general problems of the industrial areas, and will not be swayed entirely by considerations of balanced regional development in allocating funds to the States.

Finally, so far as West Bengal is concerned, we hope that the Third Finance Commission will take into account the added obligation of policing a troubled international frontier extending over 1,300 miles, which has fallen to its lot.

Conclusion

The magnitude of the task of raising the living standards of 400 million people within the framework of Parliamentary Democracy and individual freedom is stupendous. With limited resources the rapidly growing population constitutes one of the basic problems of economic growth in India. Over the period 1951-76, the total increase in population may be of the order of 206 millions as against 138 millions assumed in the Second Plan estimate. It means that a large part of the increase in the national income that would otherwise have been available for productive investment will be consumed by the growing population. Where the shortage of capital equipment, rather than labour, is the main limiting factor in development, the growing population is likely to be a serious handicap to rapid advance. This fact highlights the necessity for the control of population.

Before the First Five-Year Plan, but subsequent to the partition of the country, we spent about 30 crores on development programmes in West Bengal. During the First Five-Year Plan, we spent about 152 crores, including the expenditure on the Damodar Valley Corporation and certain other developmental schemes. During the Second Plan period, we will be spending 155 crores on the Second Plan, and about 32·5 crores as committed

expenditure on schemes completed during the First Five-Year Plan. We will also be spending about 14 crores during the Second Plan period on certain Centrally sponsored schemes. During the Third Five-Year Plan, we will be spending 33 crores on committed expenditure in respect of the First Five-Year Plan schemes, and about 60 crores in respect of committed expenditure on account of the Second Five-Year Plan schemes. In addition, we are making programmes to spend about 341 crores during the Third Five-Year Plan. Thus, our total developmental expenditure by the end of the Third Plan would be of the order of 818 crores in West Bengal after the Partition.

All that we can claim is that we have made a good beginning, and in doing so we have tried our best to look to the interests of the less privileged sections of the community. We have also tried to lay the foundations for the efficient utilization of our single important natural resource, namely, coal. On these foundations we can hope to build, and build well, in the future. What is important is to remember that we are building without sacrificing individual freedom at the altar of regimentation.

We have set ourselves a formidable task by drawing up a Plan of the dimensions envisaged. It will require great efforts both to raise the resources required and to implement the Plan. But I look to the future with confidence. There are some favourable factors. The Durgapur group of industries and various other schemes were in the construction stage during the Second Plan. During the Third Plan, they will be functioning more effectively and should help in augmenting our resources. Certain other schemes will also start yielding results. Our resources, instead of remaining static, can therefore be expected to grow as development proceeds. Further, we have now gathered sufficient experience and this experience should stand us in good stead when advancing further. There are bound to be difficulties, but we hope that these difficulties will only spur us to greater endeavour and will be surmounted by the joint efforts of us all. With courage and steadfastness we hope to advance from strength to strength. In all humility I beseech Providence to bestow blessings upon us at this juncture when we are about to launch the Third Plan, and I ask for co-operation from all sides of the House.

1961

Durgapur

A FEW years ago, when the Damodar Valley Corporation decided to put up a barrage at Durgapur, the West Bengal Government welcomed the proposal, which afforded a unique opportunity for utilizing the surplus water impounded in the reservoir behind the barrage for developing a large number of industries in this area, particularly those based on coal. This area lies in the great coal belt of India. Realizing this possibility, the Government, in 1949, issued a notification for the acquisition of the vast area which then was covered with thick forest.

Tradition has it that centuries ago highwaymen and bandits used to hide in these thickets and jungles, called the Rangamati forest. They would go from here at night to Burdwan and other towns miles away, plunder and rob the people there, and before dawn they would retreat, on stilts, to their hiding places in these forests. But things have since changed and there are today good communications from here by road and rail with the cities, both to the east and west. The navigation canal, which also starts from Durgapur, when completed, will provide cheap transport facilities for heavy goods up to the Hooghly, and, from there to Calcutta. A proposed project for connecting Durgapur with Calcutta on the east and Moghulsarai on the west by four-track electric railways will provide a still quicker transport.

In view of the importance of this area owing to the growing industrialization of our country, the Government of India have decided to construct a 100 feet wide and straight road from here to Calcutta. This will provide an alternate expressway to Calcutta.

Durgapur is situated between agricultural belts to its east and west, and the establishment of industries here will absorb the surplus manpower in

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Speech on the occasion of the opening of the Coke Oven Plant at Durgapur by Dr Rajendra Prasad on 14 March 1959.

this and its surrounding areas. Besides the Coke Oven Plant and the Thermal Plant started by the Government of West Bengal, the Steel Plant under the Government of India, an optical glass manufacturing plant, a mining machinery manufacturing plant in the public sector, and a plant to manufacture high pressure boilers in the private sector are being or are about to be set up. The West Bengal Government desire to utilize the coke oven gas produced in the Plant for supply to Calcutta and other neighbouring places for industrial and lighting purposes as well as for domestic consumption. It is also being considered whether any excess gas cannot be utilized in manufacturing fertilizers which the country so badly and urgently needs. The coal tar distillation products are to be used for the manufacture of intermediates which, in their turn, would be utilized for producing various ingredients for medicinal products, including disinfectants and paints and varnishes. Both the coke oven gas from the Plant and electricity from the Thermal Power Plant would be extensively used to supply cheap power for industries, big, small and cottage.

The total outlay for all the projects already established or to be established would amount to about rupees 18 crores, which would cover the cost of the Coke Oven and the Thermal Plants, the Coal Tar Distillation Plant and the Gas Grid to pipe gas to Calcutta. These ancillary projects will put the economy of the Coke Oven Plant on a satisfactory basis, besides raising the level of income of the people engaged in various industries.

At present there is a shortage of hard coke in this country. The Steel Mills produce hard coke just sufficient for their own use and are not in a position to spare any for the outsiders. The Durgapur Coke Oven Plant will supply this much-felt need. Amongst the by-products, this Plant will produce 15 million cubic-feet of gas a day. At the initial stages, half the quantity will be required for industries like the optical glass industry, mining machinery, and refractories.

The gas supplied in Calcutta at present is very poor in quality and insufficient in quantity. Besides, the manufacture of gas in the midst of a residential area within the city creates smoke problem. The coal burnt by the Coal Gas Company and by the private consumers for domestic use create a smoke nuisance ; and the experts have estimated that this results

in producing a deposit of 60 tons of dust and soot per square mile per month in Calcutta. It is desirable that coal gas from Durgapur should give such increased supply of coal gas to Calcutta that householders might use it for cooking purposes, thus saving coal as well as preventing the smoke nuisance.

A 60,000 K.W. Thermal Plant is an integral part of Durgapur Project, because its boilers will supply the necessary steam for the Coke Oven Plant and may, whenever necessary, utilize the surplus gas from the Coke Oven Plant. The demand for electric power in the State is growing daily. The DVC, besides its previous scheme for generating electricity, is establishing a new thermal plant for 150 Megawatt at Oariya.

Besides coke and coke oven gas, 50 tons of coal tar every day will also be produced in the Plant. From the coal tar will be manufactured napthalene, wash oil, creosote oil, road tar, pitch of various grades and phenol. The Plant will recover ammonia liquid and sulphur-containing gas which may be processed into sulphuric acid; benzol will be processed into benzine, toulene, xylene, etc.

A technical training institute will soon be established in this area, where students will be trained in the use of the products of these plants.

The Durgapur area has been fast developing into a big industrial town where, besides all these plants and factories, residential houses, market-places, schools, parks and hospitals are being built and other amenities provided for the employees and other residents.

Once again I express to you, Sir, the deep sense of gratitude of the Government and people of West Bengal and of myself for your so kindly agreeing to honour us by your visit and permit me to request you kindly to declare the Coke Oven Plant open and to give your blessings that the small industrial beginning that we are making today may be the forerunner of large industrial developments which would bring about peace and prosperity and material and spiritual benefits to the people of West Bengal of today and to the many generations to come, and may this fourteenth of March, 1959 go down in our history as the day of the dawn of a new era in industrial West Bengal.

1959

Utilization of our Mineral Resources

I REGARD it as a great privilege to be associated with this Conference, and am grateful to you for having asked me to speak to you today. I extend to you a very cordial welcome to India and to the city of Calcutta. I must compliment you on your choice of Calcutta for holding this distinguished gathering of eminent scientists from the South-Eastern regions and some other countries. Calcutta, besides being the Headquarters of the Geological Survey of India, is, as you know, the industrial capital of this region, which we lovingly and, I am sure, very appropriately, call the "Ruhr of India"—an area extending over the States of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and parts of Madhya Pradesh. In this region occurs the major portion of the deposits of coal, iron, manganese, bauxite, copper, mica and other minerals found in this country. Incidentally, among the pioneers of Indian geology were P. N. Bose and P. N. Dutt, both from Bengal. Bose was the first Indian to join the graded cadre of the Survey. He discovered the iron-ore deposits of Mayurbhanj and Bastar. They were mainly responsible for the establishment of the iron and steel industry at Jamshedpur. Dutt is credited with the discovery of large manganese ore deposits in Madhya Pradesh.

Ever since the first man made his appearance upon this earth, his growth and development and all that constitutes civilization have been intimately related to certain natural resources. He selected forests as his abode to ensure his supply of animal and vegetable food ; rivers for his fish supply and agriculture. When there were no roads for easy communication, towns grew along the great rivers, and when sea-going vessels began to be built, ports became the main centres of activity. Industry is a central factor of modern civilization, and, therefore, most of our activities are

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Inaugural address at a meeting of working party of senior geologists of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East held in Calcutta on 7 November 1957.

concentrated round the areas of mineral resources and sources of fuel and power supply. The coal mines and the steel factories have become the centres of large population, of work and activity, of manufacture, trade and business. We are living in an age of exploitation and utilization of mines and minerals. It is no accident that the large cities in Britain, continental Europe and the United States have grown up in the steel and coal areas, or that, for that reason, Calcutta has developed into the biggest industrial and business centre of Eastern India.

As science and technology advance, new machines are invented and improved varieties of alloys are discovered and brought into use. The railways use today a much better type of steel than what was available for Stevenson's first locomotive, or what Henry Ford could find for his first automobile or what the Wright Brothers had for their first flying machine. The fast-moving and high precision machines that we use today need more various and improved types of alloys than were known before. The latest phase of scientific development, namely, space travel, would call for still newer types of alloys. There is a continuous search for new sources of known minerals and as yet unknown minerals for inventing better alloys—lighter materials, harder materials, heat-resistant materials, electric insulating materials and so on. This is all within the scope of geology and mineralogy. It will be carrying coal to New Castle if I, as a layman, were to say more about it to the geologists and mineral economists who have gathered here for their deliberations.

As an administrator and as one who has taken keen interest in the development of industry, I can only say that we look forward to your researches, your scientific data and your advice to plan our development programmes. You have an important part to play in building up the future of all the developing countries, specially the economy of the under-developed countries in South-East Asia.

The exploitation and utilization of mineral resources in any region presuppose a very detailed and accurate knowledge of the mineral resources of that region. It is not yet known what exactly are the mineral resources of this country, except where they are now known to occur, such as iron-ore, mica or manganese and a comparatively recent source of lignite in Neyveli area in South India. In the Second Five-Year Plan of India, we have given

a high priority to a proper estimate and utilization of our valuable natural resources. In the First Five-Year Plan provision was made for systematic survey and detailed investigation of the more important mineral resources of this country and assess them quantitatively as well as qualitatively. The emphasis on industrial development in the Second Five-Year Plan has enhanced the urgency of obtaining more detailed information of the extent and quality of the country's mineral deposits. To this end systematic mapping, where necessary, large-scale maps, wider adoption of geophysical and geochemical methods of prospecting and exploratory drilling are to be undertaken.

The demand for coal at the end of the Second Five-Year Plan is estimated to be about 60 million tons. This calls for an increase in coal production by 22 million tons. Some additional production may be obtained by employing better working methods in the existing mines, but a number of new areas will also have to be opened up. The expansion of steel production will require 9·73 million tons of washed coking coal, while the requirements of other essential consumers have been estimated at 1·68 million tons.

The Second Five-Year Plan envisages the construction of three steel plants of one million tons ingot capacity each, at Rourkela, Bhilai and Durgapur; one of these will have provision for the production of 350,000 tons of foundry grade pig iron.

The Geological Survey of India and the Indian Bureau of Mines have undertaken extensive investigation programmes. These include coal, copper, manganese, chromite, gypsum, lead-zinc, tin and others. Exploration and development of the country's oil resources are also major tasks to be undertaken under the Second Plan period.

The average value of the mining products, such as are annually consumed in the country and exported, is as much as Rs. 130 crores, that is, nearly 7 per cent of the total industrial production of Rs. 2,000 crores or so. The annual output of coal, around 34 million tons, is worth about Rs. 75 crores. Some of the minerals, such as ilmenite, kyanite, mica, rutite and syllimanite, are hardly used in India and are almost wholly exported, while others, like apatite, asbestos, china clay, coal, copper-ore, feldspar, gold, graphite, gypsum, iron-ore, lead-ore, ochre and salt, are almost entirely

consumed in India. Between these two groups there are certain minerals, like bauxite, barytes, chromite, magnesite, saltpetre and steatite, which are partly exported and partly utilized in India.

India is greatly deficient in base metals, and we have been importing large quantities of aluminium, brass, copper, lead, tin and zinc. Our mineral resources, explored and unexplored, exploited and unexploited, are in the nature of capital assets, and it will be our endeavour to see that they are properly utilized to the best advantage of the country.

I understand that the International Geological Congress, which is one of the oldest international scientific bodies, appointed a committee many years ago for the compilation of International Geological maps of all the continents, and in this joint endeavour the most experienced geologists of the world took part. Geological maps of Europe and South America were completed several years ago, and the latest one to be published is that of the African Continent. Unfortunately, no such map is yet available for Asia and the South-East Asia. This part of the world has remained comparatively neglected in more senses than one. I am glad to know that the long-felt need for a comparative geological map of this area will be soon fulfilled. Your maps will form a valuable background for the study of the geological history of individual countries, and they will also provide a cue for fresh researches and explorations. It is a matter of gratification to us that the Geological Survey of India has been actively associated with this project, and that this body will be co-ordinating your efforts in the preparation of the geological maps of this region. Such surveys of natural resources call for united and co-ordinated efforts of all the people, for Nature, while forming the rocks and mountains, rivers and seas, forests and deserts, knew no political boundaries. You have an extensive field of work and an important assignment. We shall watch with eagerness your endeavours, and wish you all success.

1957

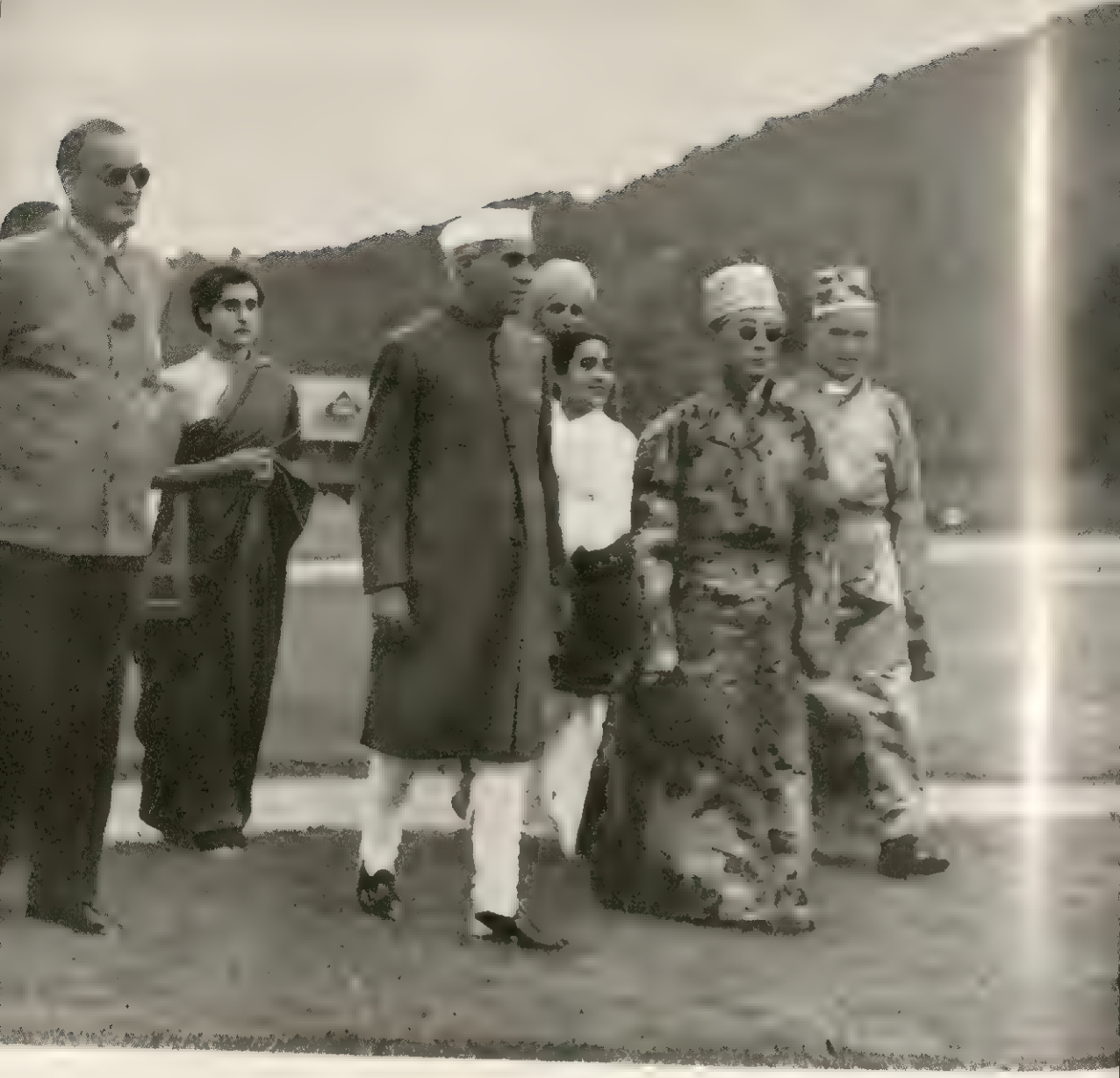
Driving through the streets of Calcutta with the two Soviet leaders, 1955
L to R Nikolai Bulganin, Dr Roy, Nikita Khruschev

With President Tito of Jugoslavia, 1955

With Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip at Dum Dum airport, 1961

Senator Hubert Humphrey greets Dr Roy, a guest of honour,
at a luncheon in the Foreign Relations room of the U.S. Senate, in 1961

Greeting President Ho Chi-Minh of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam
on his arrival in Calcutta, 1958



In Sikkim, 1952

Welcoming Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, 1956

Irrigation and Power

SRI BHATIA and members of the Central Board of Irrigation and Power, delegates and friends: I am glad that you have selected this city as the venue of your meeting because it will afford you an opportunity not only to see some of the work that is being done here but also to study, at close quarters, some of the problems with which this state is confronted. If you look at the map of West Bengal, which is published in the brochure given to you, you will find that both geographically and topographically this is a peculiar state. It is criss-crossed with various watercourses, some of which are derived from the Himalayas, and the others come from the Central India or the Santal Parganas. Most of the water that we see round about Bengal is not really upland water. It comes from the sea during the tides. As a matter of fact, those who have studied the formation of this delta of Bengal tell us that this land was formed by silting. Silt is deposited where the sea and the rivers meet, and thus, slowly, this alluvial land of Bengal has formed. There was a time when this whole area was under the sea and the land came into being gradually. I have referred to this important point for those who undertake research in the field of irrigation and power. They will have to understand the composition of the land in this area before they are able to give any sound advice with regard to the development of this area.

One of the main problems that Calcutta and its hinterland has been facing is the problem of drainage. Owing to the vagaries of the rivers that surrounded this little piece of land, some of the rivers which used to drain away the accumulated water from Calcutta and its surrounding areas have dried up. And the drainage is a perpetual worry to those who are responsible for maintaining it in Calcutta and its environs.

Inaugural address at the thirty-first Annual Research Session of the Central Board of Irrigation and Power held in Calcutta on 5 June 1961.

Towards the end of his speech, your Chairman, Sri Bhatia, referred to me as a physician, and also as an engineer. It may be of some interest to you to know that, instead of being a doctor, I was about to be an engineer. That, however, is past history. Today I speak to you as a layman. Though I am a layman I am interested in the development of power and projects of this area. This again is history. You will recall that, when the question of the partition of Bengal came up, the districts of Khulna and Jessore, both of which had a Hindu population in the majority, were first allotted to West Bengal; and Murshidabad was allotted to East Pakistan. Then, it was pointed out to Sir Cyril Radcliffe that, although Murshidabad had a very large and important majority of Muslim population, it would be better to connect it with West Bengal because some of the important tributaries that feed the Ganges, such as the Jalangi, the Mathabhanga and the Bhagirathi, flew through this district.

Engineering is as old as life itself. Some of the tiniest creatures show great skill in making their cells and shelter. We are fascinated by their beauty, their form and strength and utility. There is a lot of science of strategy in the warrens that the rabbits build; we see perfect layout and planning in the ant-hills, and a great deal of organization and systematic town-planning, temperature control even, in the beehives. It is the little beavers, perhaps, who made the first artificial reservoir by building dams. For man there has always been so many things to learn from these little creatures, there has been so much to admire in their creative instinct! Yet, man has been slow in learning from these creative creatures the utilization of locally available materials for construction and adherence to a strict time schedule against heavy odds.

Man's own appearance on this planet puts him straight into a life-and-death struggle with Nature. The story of human civilization is largely the story of what we have built, and our history is written mostly on the face of such structures. The earliest known relics of the once glorious civilization of Mohenjodaro and Harappa give ample evidence of the existence of well developed science of public health engineering, town-planning and house-building. Later excavations have also revealed what could be described as provision for irrigation and even control of floods and soil erosion. The fact that our famous temples on the sea beaches are

still there bears testimony to the knowledge of the science of tidal waves that our ancestors had acquired. To achieve all this was required scientific knowledge, and not mere instinct or religious faith as some people are apt to suggest. Their scientific knowledge of soils, weather forecast, geometric patterns and of building materials have stood the supreme test of time. Later, architecture showed great skill in the designs of stupas, caves, temples, forts and other monuments. Today, unfortunately, we are at a stage when we have lost our link with the past, but we have not yet got a firm grip on the present. We are decades behind modern science. We have been learning from others' text-books without much caring to apply this knowledge to the local conditions. It is true that the Independence has given our young men and engineers an opportunity to build things with their own hands, using our own materials and according to their own designs. But we have to make up for the loss of the inactivity and isolation of two hundred years under foreign subjugation.

Your Chairman has given us an account of the large number of research projects that are being carried out in various parts of this country. While fundamental research work is needed for evolving new designs and techniques, more stress should be laid on researches relating to specific problems. We have little time and lesser resources for meeting our pressing problems. Researches should be directed towards bridging the gulf between thought and action.

What we need today is large teams of practical and general-purpose engineers, overseers and skilled workers with some selected specialists to plan and guide their work. What is essential is that every engineer in the field should take a positive and creative interest in his work. He should be proud of his assignment and should live with his work. His engineering skill should be supported by strong common sense ; he should, as far as possible, identify himself with the environment and take a sympathetic attitude to the needs and aspirations of the local people. An engineer without these qualities would be of much less utility, for he would merely act as a tool and a part of the machine, as an automaton, his mind and heart not in the project. We want engineers who can see beyond the blue print, beyond the present times and beyond the immediate objective—one who can foresee and, if necessary, forestall.

While you are here discussing and making observation tours, you will get to know quite a lot of some of our projects. We have been facing manifold problems. Schemes of irrigation, flood control, drainage and power supplies are being studied. As you are aware, we have for all this approached the Ford Foundation, who are sending here this month a large team of experts. They will study and recommend what type of irrigation, flood control, drainage, water supply and sewerage are necessary for Calcutta and its hinterland.

You have already heard about the Damodar Valley Project. This work has more or less been completed. The target of irrigation under this project is 9,73,000 acres, inclusive of 2,20,000 acres of the old Damodar and Eden canal systems. The Mayurakshi reservoir project has been completed; it has the capacity to irrigate 5,65,000 acres. The Kangsabati project, on which work is in progress and which is estimated to cost Rs. 25·26 crores, is likely to bring under irrigation some 8 lakh acres in the districts of Bankura, Midnapur and Hooghly. We have drainage schemes in Sonarpur and Bagjola in 24-Parganas, Ghuni-Jatragachhi and Amta in the Howrah district and some others in Midnapur district. About 1·5 lakhs acres of land lying within this basin, where crops used to suffer damage every year, have been rendered fit for better agricultural use. The West Bengal Flood Enquiry Committee, set up in December 1959, has submitted its preliminary report. As advised by this Committee, two survey investigation schemes have been taken in hand for collection of data required for the formulation of flood control works.

The project for the reclamation of the North Salt Lake area is intended to extend the bounds of Calcutta towards the east. This will cost Rs. 19·20 crores and will reclaim 3·75 square miles by raising the land level. The reclamation will be effected by depositing the silt from the River Hooghly. The neighbouring land of the North Salt Lake area will also be opened up for agriculture.

Our River Research Institute has been conducting investigations and researches on subjects relating to the behaviour of rivers, such as the problems of decay in tidal rivers and the methods and techniques of anti-erosion measures. The Institute has also, at times, undertaken studies of various problems referred to it by other States. It has also taken up

estuarine investigations in the Sunderban areas. We approached, in this connection, the Dutch Government. They have sent us one of their very important and renowned Professors to study the Sunderban areas and find out a method of reclaiming the land, which is very suitable for cultivation but is at present always in danger of being overflooded with salt water.

As for power projects, all those that have already been included in the First, the Second and the Third Five-Year Plans are situated mostly in the Burdwan district, near about the Durgapur area, because coal is available there. We have now decided to spread out to other areas. We have to link up the production of hydro-electric power at Jaldhaka, and to supply power to the near about areas of Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling. The power supplies in Jalpaiguri and Murshidabad districts must also be linked up by building a few intermediate generating stations. We propose to cover gradually the whole of West Bengal with a net work of electric connections.

Then there is the Ganga Barrage project. It is of vital importance to Calcutta and its hinterland because, first, it is only the upland water from the Ganges flowing into the Hooghly that can save the port of Calcutta, which today carries nearly 40 per cent of the total export trade of India; secondly, this will prevent the salination of the water of the Hooghly, which, during the month of May, just before the approach of the Monsoon, sometimes becomes so saline that one cannot drink it when it is supplied for domestic use. Moreover, when this water is used in boilers of railway engines and of various factories, the boilers get corroded. To remedy all these it is necessary to implement as quickly as possible the Ganga Barrage Project, already accepted by the Government of India. You of course are the experts, and most of you no doubt know the details of the project. There may, however, be some among you who will be interested to know that this project consists of a barrage across Farakka, a feeder canal falling into the Bhagirathi and a barrage across the Bhagirathi. The feeder canal will carry the heads water necessary to flush the Hooghly system. This proposed connection of the Ganges with the Hooghly will also provide a very important water route for transport barges, steamers and other crafts to move from Calcutta right up to Kanpur and other places in U.P. I need not go into the details of these schemes because, I understand, the details

are being circulated here. My friend Sri Bhatia has quoted Vivekananda. May I also quote from another poet who once sang: "It is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." My formula is, better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all.

1961

Small-Scale Industries and Efficient Production

THIS is not the first time that I am talking about the case for small-scale industries, and the contribution that these industries can make towards the solution of many of our problems, such as unemployment, the rehabilitation of refugees, and the economic upliftment of the country in general. My young friend Sri T. Ghose has made a special study of this very important subject, and he has often given new ideas which deserve very careful consideration. Sri P. C. Sen in his Presidential address has also given some ideas which may be tried out by the research workers of the Bureau, particularly the idea of using second-hand machines and the idea of a common workshop method for small-scale industries as means to efficient production at a lower cost. The question of using second-hand capital equipment is a very interesting one, particularly in the present context of our foreign exchange position. I would request the industrialists to think over this question and see if second-hand machines could be profitably used in certain sectors of production, if not in all sectors. As for the common workshop method and the co-operative way of production, there cannot be two opinions about their importance in sound growth of small-scale industries in our country.

BETTER SOURCE OF EMPLOYMENT

Small-scale industries have a very vital role to play in the context of the most pressing problem of the day, namely finding employment for the able-bodied millions, specially for the refugees who have so much aggravated the problem of unemployment. The large-scale industries cannot afford to forgo the advantages derived from the newer techniques and from the recruitment of personnel on an all-India basis. They have to cater not

Address as Chief Guest at the Ninth Annual General Meeting of the Bureau of Industrial Statistics, Calcutta, 20 September 1958.

only to the needs of the local people or business, whether textiles or jute goods or engineering or tea, but they have also to compete in the world markets for selling their products overseas for the purpose of earning foreign exchange. Adoption of modern techniques or modernization of factories means reduction of employment potential, which, though inevitable, displaces a large number of people from employment. These newly unemployed people, added to the number of the existing unemployed, would create a baffling problem. It is the small-scale industries, if they are properly organized and developed, that offer immense possibilities for enlarging the scope of employment, and thus can lead to a solution of this problem.

A question that requires careful consideration is whether small-scale industries should be capital-intensive or labour-intensive. If creation of employment opportunities be the criterion, then they should be made labour-intensive. But here also a lot of research work is needed to lay down a clear-cut procedure. It is often argued that small industries should take the fullest advantage of modern techniques, if they are to maintain their existence on a prosperous basis. But rich in man-power as India is, it is essential to make fruitful use of this power. There is a level up to which manual production may prove cheaper. The larger the level of production the greater is the need for use of machines. Only a careful study can indicate the stage where a unit should go in for machines.

Two Types of Co-Operatives

It is accepted that small-scale industries should grow side by side with large-scale industries. The development should, therefore, be based on plans and programmes which would enable the former to exist as profit-earning concerns, making at the same time their contributions to the national economy. Planning for development of this sector of industry should take into account not only the requirements of finance, technical help and training of labour, but also the organizational set-up, including the most important part of it, namely, the sales organization. It has been the policy of the Government to encourage co-operative enterprise, for this is likely to achieve a greater measure of success in organizing an industry than is possible by the endeavour of an individual or a proprietory concern. Co-operatives should be the pivot on which the development of

small industries should take place. It is necessary to ensure a regular supply of raw materials to the producers. Secondly, the finished products must be of good quality ; and, thirdly, the producers must have the capacity to hold the finished goods until market conditions are favourable. It is for this reason that we, in the Government of West Bengal, have decided to organize two new types of co-operatives: producers' co-operatives, and serving and marketing co-operatives. The latter will be responsible for the processing and supply of the standard quality of raw materials and the marketing of the finished goods. These co-operatives may be helped by the Government with capital.

Functions of the Co-Operatives

A co-operative society, which is responsible for supplying and processing raw materials, should handle the work on behalf of the entire group, for which the society is meant. The purchasing operations are a vital part of the commercial aspect of an organization. If a co-operative society undertakes this work, the administration of the policy will be to the maximum benefit of its member firms. As it should be able to make bulk purchases, the price is expected to be less than what an individual firm would pay for buying a small quantity of the same material. It can choose the time when purchases of specific materials should be made, and it can look after the requirements of a purchasing contract in a more efficient manner. Besides, the processing of raw materials according to the standard specification is a vital step forward.

The work on the production side can similarly be conducted with greater efficiency under the initiative, guidance and facilities offered by the producers' co-operative. It can establish a common workshop, arrange for the drawing of designs, and streamline the programme of production for the whole group. A small firm producing a certain type of goods is not expected to have the facilities for doing every bit of work needed to bring out a product, and it can surely take the advantage of the common workshop. This will result in lowering the cost of production. The firms can also be guided in the choice of designs and carrying out the programme of production.

As for sales, the marketing organization of the co-operative should take charge of this, and carry it to a successful end. It is true that salesman-

ship is a difficult art. But conscious co-operative endeavours to direct sales operations in a profitable manner should surely be able to break the rut and improve the position of the member firms. It should also be able to decide the channels of marketing and discharge all the necessary functions, including advertisement and propaganda, better than any individual concern can do. This organization should also make, from time to time, market-surveys to ascertain such product-characteristics as quality, durability, design, etc. Besides, it should be responsible for assessing the existing and potential market demands.

Industries and their Location

I would like to emphasize the importance of location with regard to small-scale industries. A particular industry should be established only in a region where there are both natural and man-made facilities for such industries. I am thankful to Sri Ghose for giving me the following list of small industries with their locations:

1.	Ceramics and Toys	Nadia and Murshidabad
2.	Wood Work	Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar
3.	Textiles	Midnapur and Nadia
4.	Iron Foundry	Howrah area
5.	Silk and Silk waste	Murshidabad
6.	Mat and Rope	Bankura and Midnapur
7.	Bellmetal	Nadia and Midnapur
8.	Lac	Purulia
9.	Brick and Tile making	Near the Ganges in Hooghly and Burdwan
10.	Clay modelling	Bankura
11.	Firebricks	Birbhum
12.	Fruit preservation	Malda
13.	Pisciculture	24-Parganas, Sunderbans and Lalgola
14.	Leather goods	Calcutta and 24-Parganas

To work on these suggestions efficiently, the units, catered by the twin co-operatives, should be located in adjacent areas. The advantages of being located in a compact area are self-evident, and even now industries of similar nature are more or less situated in one area, in close proximity to one another. Beginning from the transport cost to expenses on publicity, as envisaged, if the work is jointly carried on by co-operatives, there would be considerable reduction in expenditure, which would lead to a lowering of the cost of production. Another problem which is pertinent in this context is that of trained personnel. The Industries Department of the State have various training institutions in different districts of West Bengal. The training given in a particular area should be in conformity with the type of industry that exists in that area or is expected to develop there. Perhaps the Bureau of Industrial Statistics might help in the assessment of such areas where a particular industry can be developed.

In the development scheme of any small-scale industry, the technical efficiency of production usually receives greater attention than the commercial aspect of purchasing raw materials or of selling its products. Maybe, this is due to lack of any concrete ideas for developing the commercial side of its activities. The commercial aspect is not as concrete as the techniques and economies of production. But it has to be borne in mind that if selling and purchasing operations of a small-scale industry are not properly guided, and if endeavours are not made for their constant improvement, it may have to face not only the danger of stagnation but its total elimination. Researches, statistical or otherwise, can surely be helpful in indicating the ways and means of directing the operations of sales and purchases in the most efficient manner.

Conclusion

I do not wish to close this subject without a reference to the psychological and practical value of encouraging people to take to small-scale industries as a gainful occupation. A small industrialist of today is sometimes the magnet of a big industry tomorrow. It may not be an exaggeration to say that small-scale industries helped, in the past, in producing industrial leadership and that they will continue to do so in the future. If development activities are well-founded and well-guided, the chances

for growth of industrial leadership are immense; and from this point of view alone, greater endeavours for creating opportunities for small industries should be made.

The role of statistics in studying all these vital aspects of small industries is very great. The Bureau of Industrial Statistics has undoubtedly made valuable contributions, but vast fields are still lying untouched.

1958

Functional Beauty and Cottage Industries of Japan

After my recent tour of Japan I have been asked a number of times to give my views on the small-scale and cottage industries of Japan. It is hardly possible within the limits of a short article to say something worthwhile on the subject, or to try to set forth a comparison between the cottage industries of Japan and those of Bengal. I wish, therefore, to confine myself to some broad facts only.

A question often put to me is whether it is not possible to develop cottage industries in Bengal after the Japanese fashion. The answer is an emphatic yes. But introducing cottage industries on a large scale, as in Japan, is hardly enough by itself. The Japanese as a nation are an industrious people. Unless we are able to emulate their example in this regard, mere multiplication of cottage industries would not bring us much material benefit. While for the average Japanese worker, twelve hours a day will be normal, an average Bengali tends to wilt after six hours only. It is true the Bengali has a reputation for his brains. But brains alone cannot win us a place of honour in the community of nations. That the inebriate climate of Bengal is partly responsible for our lethargy is probably true. If we leave nature alone, there are also the man-made impediments—a defective and outdated social system, and our snobbish contempt for manual labour of all kinds. Japan is far ahead of us in literacy. Ninety-five per cent of her people are literate. But, for all their literacy and education, they do not, like many of us, go in for white collar occupations only. One and all of them believe in the dignity of labour, and do not avoid manual work.

I noticed in Japan that a railway ticket-collector would not hesitate to

Translated by Kshitis Roy from a Bengali article that appeared in the *Sundaram*.

work on the platform as a part-time sweeper. And back home, after a day's toil, he would attend to some agricultural work. What is really necessary, therefore, is that we should not rest content with merely organizing cottage industries following the Japan's example; we should also emulate the Japanese way of labouring hard.

The products of the small-scale and cottage industries of Japan bear witness to their good taste and love of beauty. These are the elements which enable them to earn foreign credit and so add to the national income. Right from the daily ritual of arranging flowers in a vase up to packaging, whether in homes or in shops, life in Japan is marked by a feeling for beauty. And yet their inherent aesthetic sense is so subtle, so delicate, that they would never overdo things. Every thing is neat, orderly, simple but sufficient. This sense of proportion is reflected as much in the interior decoration of their houses as in the cottage-industry products they export in quantities. 'Ibona', or the art of flower decoration, is a traditional art of Japan, in which the Japanese women, quite early in life, are given regular and systematic training.

They make a thing of art out of their daily act of living. They do not hesitate to control nature and bend it to their aesthetic demands. Take, for instance, their art of growing dwarf trees and setting up a miniature garden in a tray. Even the tapes and strings that they use to tie up your shopping are things of beauty. Their cottage-industry products are in such excellent taste and they bring such satisfaction to the sense of beauty, with which we are all endowed in a lesser or greater degree, that I have no hesitation in saying that our producers and manufacturers would do well to follow their example.

The craft work of ancient India bears the same impress of functional beauty, of quality and good taste. The few specimens that we see in private or public collections never fail to surprise us for the sheer beauty of their form and design. But, all that has become part of "the glory that was India"—a matter of ancient history! Our foreign rulers, actuated by their greed to monopolize the Indian market, dealt a death-blow to India's industrial mastery of artistic handicrafts. They did not hesitate to chop off the clever and nimble fingers of our master craftsmen in order to be able to swamp India's markets with their mass-manufactured goods. All this cruel

coercion by the covetous foreign ruler was probably responsible, in an indirect manner, in making us averse to hard work.

In Japan the artist and the designer have their distinctive roles in the manufacture of the products of cottage industries. I feel our artists and designers also must play similar roles in making the products of our cottage and small-scale industries beautiful and attractive. I am convinced that our designers can immensely improve the production of such articles of daily use as brassware, utensils, earthenware utensils and the like. If we can harness the undoubted talents of our artists and designers in the industrial field, our tastes would surely improve by the introduction of an element of art in our daily life.

In most countries, it is the co-operatives which take care of the production and marketing of handicrafts. Co-operation, although a new concept in Japan, has made tremendous strides in recent years, particularly in the field of cottage industries.

We have also to consider the question of standardization of products and quality control. Although Japan does not have a Standards Institute, directly sponsored by the Government, every manufactury in Japan has its own quality control, and specialists are engaged to subject each and every product to minute scrutiny. Only such products as pass the test are given the required stamp to authorize their export to foreign markets.

One thing that was repeatedly borne on me was that Japan leads the other Asian countries in export trade, because of her success in blending the craftsman's skill with the artist's aesthetic sense.

It strikes me, from this point of view, that in our educational system we must provide for training in artistic handicrafts. Looking at Japan we see how natural and easy it is, through the cultivation of the sense of beauty and of the arts and crafts, to eradicate from the national life the evils of indiscipline, bad taste and shoddiness.

Dr Roy visited Japan in September 1956 to acquire first-hand knowledge about the small-scale and cottage industries of Japan, and in his return he tried to introduce some of the Japanese features into West Bengal.

Social Welfare and Management Education

OUR Third Five-Year Plan has just been finalized. The underlying object of the Plan, as is well-known, is to achieve the goal laid down in Article 38 of the Constitution, which is "to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all institutions". Thus, the object of planned development is not only to increase production and attain higher standard of living but also to secure a social and economic order based on the values of freedom and democracy.

In setting up this Institute also we have given priority to welfare, as its name indicates, because we feel that social welfare is the responsibility not of the State alone but also of various institutions and organizations in the State.

I think I should elaborate my ideas. We are keen on industrializing our country and that too at rapid strides, through successive Five-Year plans. But, of course, it is neither possible, nor is it our aim, to convert the entire working population of this vast country of 400 million people into industrial workers. Agriculture will continue to be the primary occupation for the major part of our people. What we want to achieve is balanced economy, between agriculture and industry. It is expected that as a result of planned development even those who live in the remotest villages will enjoy the advantages of industrial civilization, and a part of the increased earnings of those who will be working in industries will flow back to the villages, improving the rural economy. During the transition period, however, before the balanced economy has been achieved, we have to proceed

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Address at the Second Annual General Meeting of the Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management, Calcutta, held on 3 June 1961. Dr Roy was the Founder-President of this Institute. An account of his long association with it is given in full in the *Survey*, a monthly newsletter published by the Institute, in the issue for July 1962, from which this address has been adapted.

very cautiously in order to avoid such evils and sufferings as result from the isolated growth of industry, unconnected with agriculture, as happened in the past.

An industry which is interested only in increasing its production and profit can pay but scant attention to the welfare of the workers. But the responsibility of industry in this regard is particularly great because so deep and extensive is its influence on the life of the common people and not only on those who are directly employed in it. There is also no doubt, I think, that the industrialists in our country, as elsewhere, will gradually play an increasingly important role in shaping the pattern of our social life. The gravity and the importance of this responsibility should be realized by the management. It should be their business to find out what the workers want, if they are happy in their jobs, if they are living in social environments agreeable to them, and things like that.

In order to get satisfactory answers to these questions, we have got to look back and find out how and under what conditions the people, who come to towns and become industrial workers, originally lived. Most of such workers come from rural areas and belong, fundamentally, to the rural communities. For them it is not easy to live in an industrial town with its totally different surroundings and environments ; it requires, on their part, a major adjustment in outlook. The management should realize this problem and do what they can to make it easy for the workers to get used to the new surroundings and feel at home. For all this, I have often wondered whether it would not be advisable to set up new industries away from the overcrowded cities, in industrial estates, so that the workers could live in surroundings familiar to them. In that case, civic services and other amenities available in the cities will have to be provided for. I also feel that, apart from the massive industries we are setting up, we should also establish a chain of small industries.

What I would like to emphasize is that, wherever an industry is set up, we should remember that it is not an end in itself. It is only a means to an end, and the end is the welfare of the community. This is a great responsibility and there should be adequate preparation on the part of the management to assume it. In this connection, it is absolutely necessary to pay the greatest attention to efficiency in management.

Also, it is only from a happy worker, happy in his job and in his social environments, that you can expect satisfactory work. It is therefore very necessary for the management to know whether the workers find their jobs and the conditions they live in congenial. In short, the management has to acquire the capacity of looking at the workers' problems from the workers' point of view as well as from its own. Not only that. Such problems should be reviewed and considered from various other angles, such as that of the Personnel Department, of the Trade Union Organization, of the Production Department and what not. This is a very difficult task and requires much understanding of human relations, and considerable tact in handling them.

What qualities make a successful manager and what should be the scope and range of Management Education? These are difficult questions. It is often said that management cannot be taught because the ability and quality of leadership are inherent. This contention is no doubt partly true, but even then I am sure that what is regarded as the inherent quality can be vastly improved and developed by proper training and education.

We have to be very careful in deciding what subjects to be taught in Management Education, and we must be sure about the objectives of such education, for a course of vague training may cause more harm than help. It is now generally accepted that the days of "intuitive managers" are no more, owing to increasing complexities in business, advancement in technology and other changes in economic and political spheres, which, together, regulate the economic policies and activities of individual countries. Moreover, the management of a giant, modern business organization has enormous powers for doing good as well as harm, and the public opinion demands that these powers should be exercised with due caution by properly trained persons of proved competence and responsibility. It appears from all this that the study of certain fundamental subjects, such as organizational problems, the process of decision-making, the importance of scientific and technological development, planning, co-ordination, etc., should be particularly useful to those who are interested in business and management.

Then, it has to be decided whether this course in Management Education should be open to all those who are interested in a business career, or should it be restricted to those only who are already in some way connected

with the management of business. It must be realized that business education, however comprehensive and cleverly taught, can never guarantee success in business. In the United States of America, where Management Education is greatly developed, it has been observed that "graduate work in business is still not a very popular route to business career". I think a man is best fitted to assimilate and appreciate instructions about management, only after he has been "on the job" for some time, and it is on this principle that the trainees are to be selected for education in this Institute.

I would like to mention here another important point. We must be careful in not adopting the exact pattern of Management Education as evolved in some of the industrially advanced countries. The other day I was going through an interesting study made by an American Professor in Japan. The author has come to the conclusion that "firms planning branch operations in the Orient should know that the skilled Japanese workers' motivation and job expectations are not the same as those of American labour." He emphasized that "workers of all nation are apt to react to management and to job situation in terms of their particular cultural values." This view supports the observation made by Mr J. R. D. Tata: "Some thought must also be given to the social and emotional attitudes of Asians which in many ways materially differ from their brothers in the West. In India, the relationship between employer and employee is often still unconsciously perceived by the worker as a relationship between the child and the father. Whatever the merit of this thesis, it is certainly true that in India people are still inclined to be sentimental and to regard persons in authority, be it Government or industrial management, as their *mā-bāp*."

This Institute has adopted the system of in-service training and still adheres to it. That this has been the right course is confirmed by a recent survey conducted by an American Professor, attached to the University of Gujarat, with regard to training programme of Labour Welfare Officers at the different institutes in India. According to him, 500 persons are being trained at present from about half the number of vacancies, and he concludes: "The possible excess of 250 persons being trained each year puts a different light on the question of what constitutes the best type of training for a Welfare Officer. One out of every two students who enter

the training programme will probably find a position as a Welfare Officer. This casts doubt on the wisdom unless one adopts the Calcutta pattern of assuring students of their future positions before they are allowed to enrol in the Course."

It is, therefore, gratifying to note that the policy of in-service training adopted by this Institute has yielded good results, so much so that none of the 1,395 Labour Welfare Officers, 260 Business Executives and 111 Social Workers trained by this Institute uptil now have faced the problem of unemployment. So I recommend this policy strongly for adoption for every professional course like this Business Management course.

1961

Responsibilities of the Film-Makers

I AM glad to be able to meet here today this distinguished group of friends from abroad who have devoted the best part of their lives to films. I am also glad to meet here all those who are connected with films in some way or other, some, like me, as mere casual film-goers.

You, ladies and gentlemen, have come here as ambassadors of the good-will, the beauty and the arts of your country. I extend a hearty welcome to you to Calcutta, a city which happens to be one of the three principal film-producing centres in this country. Calcutta is not the birthplace of films in India. That credit should go to Bombay, but Calcutta has certainly been the cradle of films, thanks to the pioneering work of J. F. Madan and Anadinath Bose in the silent days, to Sri B. N. Sircar after the talking pictures made their appearance, and now to the wonderful work that is being done by our young directors, artistes and technicians. These young men have ushered in a new era of film-making. You can call it the age of *Pather Pānchāli,* which Sri Satyajit Ray directed for the Government of West Bengal. This film centre can also claim the credit of having received the largest number of awards, national and international.

This was a natural development, as Bengal has, during the past two hundred years, continued to be the focal point of much literary and cultural activities. It was here that giants like Michael Madhusudan, Bankimchandra, Girish Ghosh, Rabindranath and Saratchandra made their magnificent contributions to the art of story-telling and of presenting dramas on the live stage. Indian stage took its form and character in Calcutta and, very naturally, therefore, the moving pictures followed suit. Among the Indian books that have been translated into foreign or other Indian languages those originally written in Bengali have been the largest in number. In philosophy and humanistic thought also, both social and devo-

Inaugural address at the International Film Festival of India, Calcutta, 3 November 1961.

tional, Bengal gave the lead through personalities like Sri Chaitanya, Raja Rammohun, Ramkrishna Paramahamsa, Keshub Sen, Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo.

India did not achieve prominence in the world of films until quite recently, although she has continued for a very long time to be the world's third largest producer, with Japan and the United States of America occupying the two top places. India produces films in 14 languages. Today, film production is not confined to any special centres, and some of the most outstanding films are being produced in the most obscure corners of the world. But behind all these achievements have been the experience and inspiration of the best film-makers of the world.

Film is an art of a very wide range, and if I may quote Herbert Marshall: "Here is the dynamic flow of words and mind; here is past and present and future; space and time, colour and sound, mind and matter fused into one unit." In a small tin can and a few hundred feet of celluliod you can pack the finest samples of art and culture of a country and send it to any part of the world to make the astonishing, the unknown, and the unvisited world accessible to the people.

A truly great film must invite belief; it must be able to stand the test of time. In films representational realism can play a part unique in any art form, that is, authenticity. Films which depict the character and emotions of people, their economic and social experiences, as if these could happen to any people, at any time, anywhere, become really universal, really great. My friend Uday Shankar had once asked, "Why don't we create something for the whole world, yet very much Indian, in India!" Well, some of our recent films have done this as, three decades ago, Shankar's own dances did.

We welcome such international film festivals, for it is from them that we learn so much about other peoples and their new artistic trends. We would like to see more and more of the best films produced elsewhere and to show to others more and more of our own films—of course, such films as are universal in character, true to life and of the very best quality. Human beings behaving outside the accepted social conventions may sometimes make an interesting story but they will present to the watchers entirely false values of life. Even though in a drama of human conflicts the storry-teller

Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy chatting with Satyajit Roy after a screening of the latter's film *Kanchanjangha*. This was in May 1962.

Presenting the Manila Film Festival Golden Buffalo Award to Srimati Chunibala for her performance in *Pather Panchali*. The occasion was a reception given by the Government of West Bengal to the makers of the film.

may claim that a particular sequence is necessary to develop the theme and that in the end he establishes that crime and lust do not pay, the effect of watching human passions and violence on the screen, in spite of the quite arbitrary or artificial end of the picture, leaves an impression on the mind which is not helpful to the growth of a decent social behaviour. Such films have an unhealthy influence, especially on the young and the uneducated. This irrefutable fact places grave responsibilities, both social and moral, on the film-makers and on the industry as a whole.

Watching films should be a good pastime, and at its best a fine and lasting experience, and people should, on leaving the cinema house, feel exhilarated and emotionally moved. Unfortunately, some pictures turn out to be emotionally degraded rather than strong and exhilarating. Such films will do no good to the society, now or in the future.

Commercialized entertainment today is quite beyond any comparison with what it was in the past. The cinema is both an achievement and a challenge ; it is an achievement, for it has made possible to reach entertainment to the largest number of people at the smallest cost ; it is a challenge, for it has created in its wake some new social problems and it may continue to do so. You may say that public tastes dictate what should be produced, but it cannot be ignored that what is presented should also help in moulding tastes. There has to be, as a well-known film personality said the other day, "a synthesis of what the public wants and what the public needs." It is here that some agency is necessary to balance and blend the two. In some countries it is called "censorship".

Without some form of censorship, whether administered by an official or a non-official body, some films would, quite indiscriminately, show, in the name of art, scenes of lewdness and blasphemy, of unrestrained vice, perversion, and sadism and the cruelties of the jungle. There is no easy answer to censorship. Abolish it altogether, and you will soon get an exploitation of public curiosity, and this will invite some kind of intervention. Public behaviour over street accidents and murder trials shows that there are always plenty of people about who are keen on getting some sort of thrill out of such happenings. It was because of this that censorship was introduced, and it is for this that it will continue to be exercised in one form or another.

The most striking differences in films produced in various countries are, to my mind, the different ways in which certain human and emotional experiences, violence, family life, social and community behaviours are portrayed. Every country has different standards or restraints or social conventions with regard to these matter. There are, therefore, varying standards of censorship in various countries. Certain standards are applied to local productions. It would be improper for any country to judge, by its own standard, films of another country. I have mentioned this here because I have heard this issue being raised very often in discussions with film-people.

But no one would deny that there should be exchange of films between countries on a scale much larger than has been possible hitherto. We should know each other better to develop sound human understanding through this medium of information and communication.

What should be the basis of exchanging films, features as well as scientific and educational documentaries? There are certain limitations, commercial and otherwise. I am not in favour of the barter system ; it does not work for long ; nor do I favour quotas, which again impose too much economic restraints. Some countries would like to, and have to, protect their own young film industries against the competition with foreign films, at least for some time ; and there are others who are obliged to conserve foreign exchange for far more urgent needs. I am only thinking aloud when I suggest if we could not have an international body that would name a few really good films every year, say a dozen or two, which should get, subject to local cinematograph rules, import priority. For the rest, local taste and economic and commercial considerations would be the natural channel. What is important is that people should get a chance to see the best films of the world on reasonable prices as they see other ordinary films, which are produced more for entertainment than for artistic values. I do not know, nor claim to know, how this can be worked out but this is a problem to which some thought should be given, especially on occasions like this when experts from most of the important film-producing countries are meeting together. We should also think in terms of greater collaboration with the other film centres of the world in the matter of technical knowhow, loan of equipment and of jointly financed film productions and

distribution on a much larger scale than the resources of the Indian producers would permit at present.

On this occasion, we should also remember that, while film-producing facilities are increasing and improving, film-exhibition facilities are still limited. The heavy duties and the high prices one has to pay for the equipments to be imported are often prohibitive. It is necessary, therefore, for a country like India to be able to produce the requisite quantities of raw film and film-projection equipments. India will shortly have a plant which will produce raw films. Certain experiments have also been made with the production of equipments, but these facilities have to be extended. It will also be necessary that such countries as are technically advanced should provide the expert knowledge to other countries which are still somewhat backward.

There should also be an increase in the number of mobile units which carry films to the remotest corners of the country where permanent cinemas cannot be economically maintained. In this connection, I would also recommend the formation of a large number of film clubs or societies, which should encourage screening, on non-commercial or no-profit basis, if that be possible, of the best films of the world. They should also discuss the artistic merits of films and encourage appreciation of good films.

While a great deal of research has been devoted to the means of film production, little is yet known about how this means of education and communication is received by the viewers, particularly in the less developed countries and especially among the younger people and the less educated. Researches in the appreciation of and reaction to films are, therefore, necessary, and on the basis of such researches that the producers and the film-makers should be advised and encouraged to produce the desired kinds of films. The industry, however, has been shy of testing public opinion other than through the medium of box-office.

A report published in 1959 said that the number of commercial cinema houses in the world was quite over a hundred thousand, that the attendance was of the order of ten thousand millions per year, and some two thousand feature films and several thousand documentaries were produced every year and that the turnover of the world film industry was close to four thousand million dollars. It is surprising that an activity involving so much

of money, labour and leisure is so inadequately documented that the statistics about the film industry, especially in India, are not always readily available. Even the Film Enquiry Committee, which the Government of India set up in 1951, complained of this inadequacy. Films document life and events, but there are very few good and authentic records about films themselves. What is available speaks too much of what is obvious and too little of what is of vital consequence. It is essential that an industry which documents the progress of the world should also take steps to document its own activities.

The film industry works on a queer economy and on conflicting financial interests within itself. What I say is particularly true of our own country, where the financial interests of the producers, the artistes, the technicians, the distributors and the exhibitors are not adjusted and almost always these are out of gear with each other. This is detrimental to the healthy growth of any industry.

With regard to developing the film industry for the export market, I think India is not yet in a position to produce films primarily for export. Perhaps no country ever does that. We should produce good films for our own domestic market and some of these will surely be then of the standard of the international market also. A sound export market can be developed only on the basis of a sound internal market.

I am glad that some of the finest films have been brought to the Festival by so many countries, and that people of at least four principal cities in India will have the opportunity of seeing them. It was indeed a welcome idea to hold "Film Weeks" in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay in addition to the Festival in New Delhi. I am sure, the cinema-goers will appreciate the films you have brought to the Festival and that such films will help towards a better understanding between the people of your country and ours. I also hope that during your visit to this country you will have an opportunity of seeing some of our outstanding films, an opportunity of getting to know this country and of being acquainted with our artistic and cultural traditions and the rich heritage of our dances, songs and drama.

1961

AS WE KNEW HIM

In this section are collected a number of reminiscences and articles by some of those who had the privilege of working with Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy in various fields. These will reveal Dr Roy's personality and his contribution in furthering the cause of some of the institutions with which he was associated or which he himself had built up—Calcutta Corporation, Calcutta University, Jadavpur University, Rabindra-Bharati University, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, Chittaranjan Seva-Sadan, K. S. Ray Tuberculosis Hospital and R. G. Kar Medical College.

I

FIFTY-EIGHT years have gone by since I first saw Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, the tall, handsome, bright young doctor just passed out of the Calcutta Medical College with a reputation as a brilliant scholar. But it was not by my sick-bed that I first saw him.

I used to see Dr Roy on the street to the east of College Square. Then the biggest nerve-centre of the anti-partition and Swadeshi movements, College Square was frequented by students every afternoon in meetings and processions organized by the Anti-Circular Society, of which I happened to be an active member. Dr Roy would pass by on his way to the Medical College, pushing his bicycle in a carefree manner, without of course noticing the admiring look of young men within the Square, and certainly unaware of the thoughts he evoked in me.

Militant nationalism was the keynote of the Swadeshi movement. It coloured our thinking on every aspect of national life. Dr Roy with all his success as an Indian medical graduate admirably fitted into my youthful mental picture. Here was a brilliant product of our own University, doomed for ever to serve as an underdog in the Provincial Medical Service to be dominated and bossed over by raw British recruits in the heaven-born Indian Medical Service, a product of British imperialism. That was my reaction when I saw Dr Roy, about whose academic attainments I had already heard in detail from my elder brother, then a student in the Calcutta Medical College.

But fate had decreed otherwise, and Bidhan Chandra Roy scaled great heights in the medical world as the leader of the medical profession in India.

And who could then imagine that, when the nationalist movement would reach its ultimate goal and India would realize her God-appointed destiny, the stupendous burden would fall upon Dr Roy of reconstructing

a battered State to pre-eminence in the political and economic fields.

Today Dr Roy is a legendary figure whose efforts and achievements in the service of his country have passed into history. To trace in his career the makings of a great administrator would be a fruitful study, at once interesting and instructive. It was in the Corporation of Calcutta that he first came into direct touch with a huge organization of local self-government. Sincere and devoted service on a civic body has often been recognized as the high road to success in the larger national field. Experience and training, gained in administration on a narrower and more intimate plane, and by direct and constant contact with the people, have often proved to be valuable assets in the wider and more complicated government of the State. When in later years I observed Dr Roy functioning as the Chief Minister of West Bengal for more than twelve years, rescuing the storm-tossed ship of state with unerring precision, my mind often travelled back to those formative years of his public life in the Corporation of Calcutta when it was my privilege to be his close associate in a difficult period in the history of the country.

In the Civic Field

In the Corporation of Calcutta, from April 1930 to March 1933, first as an Alderman and then as Mayor for two successive terms, Dr Roy made significant contributions to civic administration and well-being. He again returned to the Corporation as an Alderman after I had left it in March 1936.

When, towards the end of 1929, members of the Congress Party came out of the Bengal Legislature in furtherance of the Civil disobedience programme and we all resigned our seats within a year and a half of our election, Dr Roy, who had been the Deputy Leader of the Congress Party in the Bengal Legislative Council, was persuaded to stand for election as an Alderman of the Calcutta Corporation. As a Congress leader of outstanding ability and eminence, his association with the Corporation would keep up the tradition established by Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das, and maintained in unbroken line by Srijut Subhas Chandra Bose, Srijut Jotindra Mohan Sen Gupta and Srijut Sarat Chandra Bose.

The Background

This tradition was deeply rooted in the prevailing political situation in the country. It is, therefore, necessary to make a brief survey of the developments in the previous decade.

Under the scheme of reforms envisaged in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, the Government of India Act of 1919 had been passed by the British Parliament, setting up the diarchical form of government with a few subjects transferred in the provincial sphere to Indian Ministers. India's demand for full self-government in the centre and the provinces had been rejected on the plea that Indians were unfit to be entrusted with such responsibility. The Congress rejected the so-called constitutional reforms and launched a programme of non-co-operation in the Special Session of the Congress held in Calcutta in 1920. While the entire country was thrown into a state of struggle and opposition, it was accompanied by the programme of constructive work for building up the nation in every sphere of its life and activity, independently of Government resources and control.

The Swarajya Party of India was established with Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das as its President and Pandit Motilal Nehru as its General Secretary. A vigorous militant programme for capturing the Legislative Councils, set up under the Act, was adopted by this Party, all the elective seats in the general constituencies were captured, a stringent code of discipline was enforced among its members and supporters, and close alliance was made with Moslem members of the Councils for the purpose of creating a working majority to defeat the Government and render the diarchical form of Government unworkable in the provinces. In the Bengal Council under Deshabandhu's leadership no Minister was allowed to function as a result of repeated votes of no-confidence against the Ministers. These successful moves, which carried the opposition to the inner sanctum of bureaucracy, created a deep impression on the public mind.

The country had taken up the bureaucratic challenge. In that atmosphere of struggle and resistance, of hope and strength, a new field of creative activity opened up before the people when the new Calcutta Municipal Act of 1923 came into operation in 1924.

The Calcutta Municipal Act of 1923

The author of the new Municipal Act was Sir Surendranath Banerjea. A member of the old Corporation far back in 1899, he had himself led the massive protest against the enactment of the previous Municipal Act which completely bureaucratized the Corporation and deprived the elected Indian members of all real power. The mass resignation of twenty-eight elected members under his leadership was a unique demonstration of solidarity, rare in those days. When twenty-two years later, Sir Surendranath assumed charge of the Department of Local Self-government in the diarchical form of government in Bengal, his outstanding achievement was the new Calcutta Municipal Act of 1923. It abolished plural voting by ratepayers, created an enlarged body of elected Councillors in an enlarged City of Calcutta, provided for the election of five Aldermen, and, above all, made the members of the Corporation an autonomous civic body, the repository and fountain-head of all power and authority, with the only exception of assessment of the consolidated rate which was left to the Executive Officer.

The act also provided in five short sections that, if, in the view of the Government, the Corporation failed to perform any of its prescribed duties, the Government could call for documents and explanation, and, if not satisfied, it could itself get the thing done and realize the costs from the Corporation. Although this power was rarely exercised, it occasionally caused friction with the Government. As we shall see later, Dr Roy, when he was Mayor for the second term, had to take up the cudgels against arbitrary interference by Government under these provisions.

The Congress Role in the Corporation

As the principal participant in Bengal in the diarchical form of Government, which the Congress had earlier rejected in its demand for Swaraj, Sir Surendranath was defeated in the election to the Bengal Legislature by Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy. Dr Roy stood as an independent nationalist candidate supported by the Swarajya Party led by Deshabandhu Das. That was on the political front in the larger fight for full responsible government. But the instrument Sir Surendranath had forged for Calcutta proved a valuable weapon for fighting, on the one hand, civic backwardness

Receiving the highest award in the country, 'Bharat-Ratna', from President Rajendra Prasad in 1961

Receiving the Abhinandan Grantha, on his eightieth birthday, from President Rajendra Prasad at a ceremony held on 1 July 1961 in Calcutta

in a great city, and, on the other hand, the powerful propaganda launched by vested interests and reactionary elements, European and Indian, that Indians were totally unfit for self-government. Surendranath put the new Municipal Act on the statute-book. Deshabandhu clothed it with flesh and blood. With its revenues almost equalling those of the province of Assam, with its vast administrative machine manned and guided by highly qualified officers, with its services organized on the advanced British model, and with the autonomous power granted to elected representatives of the people, the reformed Corporation provided an excellent field for the constructive programme of the Congress, and to establish, by actual practical administration, an unanswerable case for Swaraj.

While the popular representatives on the civic body would, on occasions of grave national importance, give eloquent expression to popular sentiment, it was with a loftier objective that Deshabandhu came to the Corporation at the head of a devoted band of workers. It was to give the city a clean and efficient administration, a record of disinterested service to the neglected poor, *Daridra-nārāyana,* as Deshabandhu described them, by rescuing them from illiteracy, dirt, disease and squalor, and to establish in the larger context of the national struggle "a working model of Swaraj". That was the inspiring ideal Deshabandhu set before his colleagues when we came with him in 1924 to the first enlarged and autonomous Corporation in the country. Srijut Subhas Chandra Bose was placed at the head of the executive to carry out the policies of the Corporation, and functioned as such until he was arrested four months later and lodged in Jail in Mandalay.

Reaction on Vested Interests

Not unnaturally, therefore, the European Association and the Indian reactionaries made a common cause and raised the cry: "Calcutta in danger"—a city in which they had dominated and enjoyed special power, advantages and amenities. While the Indian Press was unanimous in according full support to the new venture in the Corporation, the more hostile sections of the Anglo-Indian Press carried on a persistent campaign centred round that war cry.

I remember the evening in April 1924, before Deshabandhu's election

as the first Mayor of Calcutta. I had been invited to a reception accorded mainly to the European Councillors by an Indian Councillor who had been elected from the Alipore locality, the fashionable residential garden suburb of European business magnates. In that informal and homely atmosphere, Sir Walter Wilson, the leader of the European Group, himself a very likable personality, gave expression to their deep apprehension that Calcutta was in danger. He referred to the activities of the Swarajya Party in the Legislature led by Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das, whose declared policy was to destroy the diarchical form of government by bringing about the fall of successive Ministers. Europeans, he said, envisaged a similar fate for all the established values in municipal life at the hands of the Swarajya Party.

Speaking after the European leader, I pointed out that it was a dual role that the Swarajya Party had to play. In the Legislative Council, the target of their attack was the diarchical form of government which they were out to destroy under their clear mandate from the electorate. In the Corporation, on the other hand, they were pledged to carry out a constructive programme of civic progress and reform in which the interests of the ratepayers were the dominant consideration. In the discharge of this responsibility, I pleaded, they were entitled to demand the co-operation of all sections in the Corporation and of all the right-minded citizens.

Deshabandhu's Practical Idealism

Deshabandhu was elected Mayor of Calcutta on the 16th April 1924, when he delivered his famous address. He laid down his programme of progress and reform in every branch of civic service laying particular stress on the service of the poor and the rapid improvement of backward areas on the vast sprawling city of Calcutta. The speech has been aptly described as his great legacy and testament for the guidance of his successors and of all of those who might be called to the post of civic duty.

The Congress Party functioned in the Corporation in the face of a united opposition, consisting of Europeans and Government-nominated members, among whom there were some very able and well-known persons. In the tense political atmosphere of the country, when clashes and conflicts between the Congress and the bureaucracy were of daily occurrence, the

Corporation assumed in the eyes of the people the character of a City Parliament in which the opposing forces were arrayed against each other week after week. In this constant trial of strength the debates in the Corporation often reached very high level and the public galleries were filled by eager visitors. To them the Corporation had become a focal point and a symbol in which the prevailing system of government in the country had been visibly reversed, the popular forces wielding power and authority and the Europeans and Government-nominated members forming the minority in opposition.

Dr Roy's Unanimous Election as Mayor

It was against this national background that on the 15th April 1931, on the motion of Srijut Subhas Chandra Bose, Dr Roy was unanimously elected Mayor of Calcutta. This unanimity was of great significance particularly at that juncture. The task of the Congress Party, as we have seen, was not only to serve the interests of all sections of the ratepayers of Calcutta but also to set an example of efficient administration in the larger interests of national self-government. Unity and solidarity in the Party was, therefore, an essential necessity to achieve this purpose.

During the previous year, however, there had been an unfortunate rift in the Congress Party over the mid-term election of an Alderman, the two groups of the Party respectively supporting the candidature of Srijut Subhas Chandra Bose and the re-election of Srijut Jotindra Mohan Sen Gupta, both of whom were in jail.

Srijut Subhas Chandra Bose was the candidate nominated by the Congress Party and had been strongly supported by Dr Roy. He was elected Alderman and then Mayor in August 1930 for the unexpired portion of the year 1930-31. But the division in the party continued and developed.

Therefore, when the Congress Party again joined together to support Dr Roy as the nominee of the Party next year and the opposition groups also supported him owing to his outstanding position as a medical man and a great social worker, his unanimous election was of very great significance. Dr Roy in his speech[1] laid some stress on this unanimity. With

[1] For the text of this speech see pp. 223-25.

becoming humility worthy of the high office he declared that giants and stalwarts had preceded him in that chair. But as a mere worker, it was that unanimity which would give him strength. He reminded the House that if the unanimity of the election would result in unity, co-operation and cohesion, it would lead to the production of an atmosphere in which discipline could grow and work could progress.

He reiterated the great objective of carrying out all-round improvement for the benefit of all citizens without any discrimination. "Let us ensure for the *Daridra-nārāyana,* as much as for the rich and the prosperous, those civic amenities which were their due," he said. In a brief but effective stock-taking of the work of half a decade since Deshabandhu enunciated his programme, he reminded his colleagues that though they had been proceeding on the path of progress, there was no room for complacency and that the ideal had yet to be realized. He also emphasized that ideals must grow or there would be stagnation.

Services Standing Committee

As an Alderman during the previous year Dr Roy had observed that in the matter of recruitment to the clerical and similar ranks in the Corporation service, there was considerable room for regulation and improvement. While the higher appointments had always been made by a Standing Committee or on its recommendation by the general body of the Corporation, power of appointment to posts carrying salaries up to Rs. 350 per month had been finally delegated to the Chief Executive Officer who had no rules or fixed system to guide him. He was, therefore, subjected to pulls and pressures, individual or communal, and sometimes at the sacrifice of justice and quality.

After Dr Roy's election as Mayor, the Congress Party under his leadership and on his initiative decided to regularize the whole matter by constituting a Services Standing Committee for the first time in the Corporation. The opposition parties adopted an attitude of hostility to the proposal which they characterized as serious interference with the authority of the executive. When the proposal was placed before the House they made vague allegations of a hidden hand working behind the proposal. The Mayor took the wind out of their sails by declaring that he himself was the

sponsor of the move. The Services Standing Committee was formed with the Mayor himself as one of the members, which again was a departure from the usual practice. The Committee, however, was formed on a representative basis with its twelve members drawn from different sections of the House. The Committee elected the Mayor as its Chairman. Rules and regulations for recruitment were drawn up, a system of periodical examinations was introduced and results published in *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette*. The appointments were made according to the rules and announced in the *Municipal Gazette*.

The Mayor as a Dynamic Leader

Dr Roy used to take a deep and direct interest in all important matters of administration. If anything had been wrongly done or something left undone affecting the vital interests of the citizens, he would not take shelter under formalities but would make a direct contact with the officers and authorities concerned. By discussion, advice and removal of difficulties, he would take every care to see that the required action was taken as quickly and completely as possible. The impact of his position and personality secured willing compliance on the part of those concerned.

Naturally he would occasionally tread on tender corns. Although he would not in any major matter disregard the prescribed procedure or the relevant Committees, even his informal interventions would not be disregarded because they had the stamp of justification and effectiveness.

Election as Mayor for the Second Term

When on April 11, 1932, I proposed in the Corporation meeting that Dr Roy be elected Mayor for the year 1932-33, the election was not unanimous. He, however, was elected with a majority of sixteen votes in a triangular contest. In his reply[1] to the speeches by members, he struck the keynote to his entire outlook as an administrator. In a characteristic reference to the charge of "interfering with the work of others", he said that the strength which sustained him was "the source of all strength, namely, work—work for its own sake so that it may bring its own reward". He said that he had at least one weakness in him and that was

[1] For the full text of this speech see pp. 225-27.

madness for work. "Call it weakness if you like, call it interference if you like, but so long as I remain a disciple of that great man who set up the tradition of this office and who laid down his life in the service of the country, I have to continue working. And in this Corporation, with the experience of the last year, I find that there is a great deal yet to be done," he said. Towards the conclusion of his speech, he declared in unequivocal terms that whether they liked it or not, whether it was a part of his function or not, he refused to occupy the Mayoral chair as an ornamental figurehead.

As a great administrator, Dr Roy always knew his own mind, and once he had made it up, there was no vacillation or wavering. That was a basic characteristic which manifested itself on all occasions, big or small, during his long stewardship of this State. And I felt that the Corporation of Calcutta during those early years was an ideal field in which that essential quality had grown and developed.

It was for his "madness for work", it was as a devotee to the cult of work to whom work is another name for worship, that he rightly earned the appellation *Karmayogin*, when in the larger field of the State Government his constructive genius found full play.

In this context I may recall an occasion many years later when I called on him by appointment in his office in the Writers' Buildings. It was in January, 1955, after I had lost direct touch with him for about three or four years. I had gone to present him with a copy of the Presidential address of the West Bengal Lawyers' Conference, having been instructed by the Committee to draw the attention of the State Government to some important matters dealt with by the Conference. When I met him I gave expression to a thought which had been uppermost in my mind during the intervening years. I said that God had given him ample scope for constructive work in that larger sphere. His face brightened up at this remark and I felt that I had touched a sensitive spot in his heart.

Just at that moment his secretary came in and put a letter in his hand. He opened it and the familiar smile came upon his lips as he read it out to me. It was a letter from Mr Lester Pearson, Prime Minister of Canada, who had written to say that the photographs he had taken during his visit to the Mayurakshi Project, otherwise known as the Canada Dam, had convinced the doubters in his own country of the utility and effective-

ness of his country's contribution for the implementation of the project. To my remark mentioned above that letter was Dr Roy's answer, indirect but eloquent.

The Rights of the Corporation

When Dr Roy came to the Corporation as an Alderman in April 1930 the Civil Disobedience Movement was in full swing. As a member of the Congress Working Committee, he himself courted imprisonment by proceeding to Delhi and attending its meeting after the Congress had been banned as an illegal organization. He was arrested at Delhi on the 26th August, 1930, along with the Congress President Dr Ansari, Srijut Vithalbhai Patel, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and others. Presiding at the Corporation meeting on the following day, I offered my homage to Dr Roy and to the other great leaders who were in the "Roll of Honour" along with him. Dr Roy was brought down to Calcutta and lodged in the Alipore Central Jail.

The Civil Disobedience Movement acquired an added intensity in Bengal. In common with other young men, a number of teachers of the Corporation Primary Schools joined the movement and were arrested and imprisoned. As the tempo of the Movement continued to grow, the Government came to entertain the belief that the Corporation was actively encouraging its employees to join and strengthen the movement. Ironically, a telegram from Lahore addressed to the "President, City Congress Committee, Calcutta" was delivered to me as the Deputy Mayor in the Corporation office.

When Sir John Anderson was sent by the British Government as the Governor of Bengal, he came with the reputation he had acquired as the British Secretary of Ireland. It was openly commented in India that during his regime in Dublin Castle the British "Black and Tan" soldiers, as they were called, were employed by him for crushing the Irish Freedom Movement. And it was stated that he had been specially deputed to deal with the freedom movement in Bengal and that the Corporation of Calcutta had a special place in this programme.

During this period the preparation and propaganda of interested persons to thwart India's demand for self-government had been intensified

in India and England, and the Congress administration in the Calcutta Corporation was sought to be utilized as a handy weapon against India's claim. This nefarious attempt was ruthlessly exposed by Dr Roy in his speech in winding up the debate to which reference is made later.

In fact, in the following year, in the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms in London, a Moslem Knight from Calcutta made the Corporation the principal target of his attack. These attacks, however, were successfully countered by another Indian delegate, Sir Nripendra Nath Sircar, the eminent Calcutta lawyer, who, with facts and materials he used to requisition from me from time to time when I had succeeded Dr Roy in April 1933, was able to present the activities of the Calcutta Corporation in their real perspective, and to dispel the miasma of prejudice sought to be created against the Corporation.

With the dual purpose of preventing the Corporation from appointing any political sufferers in its services, and of providing an official and authoritative foundation for the reactionary propaganda in England, the Government of Bengal, purporting to act under the provisions of the Calcutta Municipal Act mentioned before, which they claimed gave them overall supervisory powers of interference in cases of failure or break-down, sent a note to the Corporation demanding "effective steps to be taken to prevent students and teachers from taking any active part in any political propaganda or in any form of civil disobedience in future".

This unprecedented and illegal assumption of non-existent powers on the part of the Government created bitter resentment, and the debate on this matter in the Corporation was of a high order. In winding up the debate on the 26th July, 1932, Dr Roy made a memorable speech[1] from the Mayoral chair. It was a powerful exposure of the utter weakness of the Government's position. He demonstrated how this move on the part of the Government synchronized with the adverse propaganda in England and India conducted on similar lines and how the Municipal Act was being made to serve the political game of the reactionaries. He maintained that the Corporation should stand upon its rights and refuse to allow the executive Government more powers than they possessed under the Act.

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[1] For the full text of the speech see pp. 228-31.

Sir John Anderson, however, persisted in his efforts. The Government brought in a Bill to amend the Calcutta Municipal Act for preventing the appointment of political sufferers in the Corporation service. The Bill also provided that anyone who had suffered imprisonment could not hold any post in the Corporation and that grants-in-aid could not be given by the Corporation to any institution or organization having an office-bearer or Committee member who had been convicted of any offence.

In the absence of the Congress Party in the Legislature and in the teeth of strenuous opposition of the nationalist members, the Bill was passed into law, and the Corporation was required to implement it. By that time Dr Roy had left the Corporation. Winding up the debate in the Corporation meeting on the amending Act I declared that as a legally constituted body the Corporation must try to give effect to the provisions of the amending Act. I said that the Corporation would institute a close scrutiny of the antecedents of all Committee members and office-bearers in all institutions, including hospitals, schools and social welfare organizations, and that pending completion of such enquiry payment of all grants would be withheld. Enquiries would have to be conducted, where necessary, even outside the Province, as Calcutta was a cosmopolitan city and had many non-Bengali institutions. The result was that all grants were held up and there was a huge outcry against the amending Act, from all sections of the public. Sir John Anderson sent word to me that he had seen through the game and would devise more stringent measures. But in actual effect this was followed by a hint given through the relevant officer of the Corporation that a mere certificate by the Ward Councillor recommending the payment of the grant would be sufficient for the purpose. So the amending Act became a dead letter never to be revived again.

The question of the respective powers of city corporations *vis-à-vis* the Central authority was dealt with by Dr Roy at the civic reception accorded to him and Sir Nilratan Sircar, the eminent Calcutta physician, by the Corporation of Madras on the 26th August, 1932. In a lucid and learned speech[1], after discussing some common problems affecting the city corporations, he cautioned them against the tendency of the Government to

[1] For the full text of the speech see pp. 232-34.

encroach upon their rights and powers. He also visualized that in the near future when the government of the country would pass into the hands of Indian representatives of the people, this tendency might grow more and more. Therefore, he felt that "the time has come when Local Authorities in India should meet and consult one another for the purpose of protecting the interest of the ratepayers whom they serve, from undue interference from Central authority."

The Moslem Question in the Corporation

After his election as an Alderman in April, 1930, Dr Roy as the Leader of the Congress Party at the time was immediately confronted with a difficult situation. Srijut J. M. Sen Gupta having been elected Mayor while in detention in Alipore Central Jail, the task of presiding over Corporation meetings and performing other functions of the Mayor would fall on the Deputy Mayor. The Congress Party nominated me for the office of the Deputy Mayor, and Dr Roy, as the Leader of the Party, himself proposed my name at the Corporation meeting. His proposal was carried.

The election for the first time of a non-Moslem as Deputy Mayor created a crisis. Mr Fazl-ul Huq who had come in as an elected Councillor, while admitting that the choice was a worthy one, opened his broadside on behalf of the Moslem Councillors. They stood out from all the Standing Committees when these were formed at a later meeting. Their places were left unfilled. Firmness, tact and persuasion on the part of Dr Roy, and also, I may add, a desire to serve the ratepayers on the part of the Moslem members, brought about a thaw in their attitude after a spell of three months when they joined the Committees which then started to function.

Under Deshabandhu's guidance and leadership, the Congress Party in the Corporation had consistently acted in close co-operation with the Moslem community, assigning to them position and power in the Committees and services more than commensurate with their numerical, educational and tax-paying strength in Calcutta. Between 1935 and 1940 Calcutta had three Moslem Mayors and two more thereafter up to 1946, all elected with the support of the Congress Party.

When, however, the Moslem League came into power in the provincial administration in 1937, they wanted to utilize their overall majority in

the province for curtailing the influence of the Hindu majority in the Calcutta Corporation. They introduced a Bill in the Legislative Assembly to amend the Calcutta Municipal Act of 1923 by which they hoped to eliminate Congress influence by converting the Hindu majority into a permanent minority, by a small increase in the number of Moslem and Anglo-Indian seats, and by throwing the Moslem members into the arms of Government-nominated and European members. The Bill was passed in the Assembly by the Moslem majority joined by the European and Anglo-Indian members and was pending to be passed by the Council.

The Bill had evoked the strongest opposition in and outside the Assembly. *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette,* then under the able editorship of Srijut Amal Home, brought out a special number on the Bill in July, 1939. I remember I wrote an angry article in which I described the Bill as a measure "conceived in hatred, born in injustice, and nurtured in violence". This expression was adversely quoted in an editorial article in support of the Bill in an Anglo-Indian daily of Calcutta.

Dr Roy also contributed an article[1] in the same special number but his approach was on a different plane. With a masterly array of facts and figures and reasons, and in its true historical perspective, he presented a critical analysis of the situation and exposed the utter hollowness of the Moslem claim to dominate the civic body in Calcutta. It was a notable contribution to the invincible case against the Bill.

He concluded the article with an inspiring prophecy: "If I may make a forecast," he wrote, "I can state my conviction that so long as the Congress members work honestly and sincerely there need be no apprehension in their mind of being a subservient body in the Calcutta Corporation, even if the amending Bill is carried in the Council." "But, at the same time," he continued, "one cannot overlook the fact that the action taken by the present Government is not based upon reason, justice and fair play." Here again, his ultimate emphasis was on sincere and honest work. It was a statesmanlike approach in a difficult situation worthy of a national leader who believed in the efficiency of real service to the people.

It will be noticed that Dr Roy used the expression "the present Gov-

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[1] The article is reproduced on pp. 247-51.

ernment". It was almost prophetic, as subsequent events proved. In December 1941, the Moslem League Government was thrown out of office by the Coalition Party formed with Mr Fazl-ul Huq as the Chief Minister. With the Congress Party extending its full voting support, with Dr Syama Prasad Mookerjee accepting the office of the Finance Minister, and with the portfolio of Local Self-Government which was responsible for the Bill being assigned to me, the Bill died a natural death when pending in the Upper House, with no one to mourn its loss.

Lead given on Political Questions

When the country was passing through a critical period of political tension and bureaucratic repression, it was only natural that an autonomous civic body of representatives of the people would give expression to popular feelings when deeply stirred. I remember the historic occasion when, with Deshabandhu Das in the mayoral chair, the Corporation recorded its protest and condemnation when Srijut Subhas Chandra Bose was arrested and imprisoned in 1924.

Shortly after Dr Roy's election as Alderman, the arrest and incarceration of Mahatma Gandhi electrified the entire nation. On the 18th May, 1930, in an atmosphere of grim and solemn determination, the Corporation adopted a resolution moved by Dr Roy, "offering its most respectful homage to Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of non-violence" and tendering to him its "sincerest felicitations on the signal triumph achieved by him in his campaign".

This bold and unambiguous declaration regarding the triumph of Mahatmaji's campaign of Civil Disobedience on the floor of the House which contained European and Government-nominated members, was characteristic of the courageous lead which Dr Roy was giving to the Congress Party. This was followed three months later by the Corporation's felicitations to Dr Roy himself, expressed through the Deputy Mayor, on his arrest and incarceration for participation in the Movement.

There were several other instances from time to time when Dr Roy followed in the footsteps of Deshabandhu Das in this respect and the Corporation truly reflected the nationalist public opinion of the citizens of Calcutta.

On one such occasion the Corporation, at the instance of the Mayor, Dr Roy, paid its respect to the courage and devotion shown by the late Dinesh Chandra Gupta who had been tried and executed for causing the death of Lt. Col. Simpson, the Inspector General of Prisons, by shooting in the Writers' Buildings. There were two other companions with him, Binoy and Badal, who also had joined him in the raid, but died after administering poison to themselves. Dinesh did the same but in his case the poison did not work, with the result that he was arrested, treated in the jail hospital, and after recovery tried and sentenced to death. He put the executioner's rope around his neck and died with the words *Bande Mātaram* on his lips. The Mayor said that as a matter of personal conviction and as a matter of policy followed by the Congress, one did not accept the method adopted by Dinesh Chandra Gupta. But he recalled that the British judge who had tried him felt that this young man was not actuated by any sense of self-interest or personal hate. The Mayor observed that the judge was only recording the verdict of history. "We have read instances in history when the perpetrators of acts like this in one generation and punished for them, have been acclaimed as martyrs by the next generation," he said. He asked the members to stand and show their respect to the courage and devotion shown by this young man.

When Mahatma Gandhi came to know of this resolution, he expressed the view that it should be withdrawn as it might be open to misinterpretation. Accordingly, when the proceedings came up for confirmation at a subsequent meeting, the Mayor pointed out that according to the rules it might not be possible to expunge the resolution. He, however, wanted it to be placed on record that he wanted to have the resolution withdrawn as desired by Mahatma Gandhi.

It is interesting to note that at this meeting the galleries were filled with European young men from the Calcutta business houses. It was stated that they had organized themselves under the name "Royalists". There was, however, no incident except a minor one. When I drew the attention of the Mayor that the dignity of the House was being offended by smoking in the galleries, the Mayor gave a warning which had the desired effect.

Planning in the Corporation

Before I conclude, I shall refer to an article[1] by Dr Roy in *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette* of November 25, 1933. It outlined a Five-Year Plan for the development of Calcutta which revealed his constructive thinking and deep understanding of the urgent and long-term problems of the city. The first place was given to improvement of *bustees* which also figured prominently in Deshabandhu's programme. "I feel convinced," wrote Dr Roy, "that if the Corporation allows these *bustees* to thrive and grow in filth and wretchedness, in squalor and dirt, the whole city is thereby made to suffer financially, socially and hygienically." He then turned his attention to development and repair of roads, disposal of refuse, generation of electricity and expansion of the City by opening out new residential areas. And he also visualized probable sources of necessary finance which was essential for practical and effective planning. He concluded by suggesting that the Corporation should immediately form a Special Development Committee, if necessary, with members co-opted from outside. "If the Corporation loses this opportunity, Heaven help us," he said.

It is heartening to note in this connection that when the reins of the State administration came into his hands, and the builder and the architect in Dr Roy found fuller scope in a larger field, the most comprehensive and far-reaching measure for the planned development of Calcutta was initiated and organized by him in the shape of the Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organization. Soon thereafter he was removed from the field of his labour but not before the foundation had been laid truly and well for the work to be continued by his distinguished successor, Sri Prafulla Chandra Sen, the present Chairman of the Planning Organization.

Santosh Kumar Basu

[1] The article is reproduced in pp. 241-46.

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Bidhan Chandra Roy, universally respected for his wide and deep erudition, his eminent qualities as a physician, his remarkable intelligence, indefatigable energy and incessant industry in carrying on the tasks whether of an institution or of the state which he had taken upon himself and his robust and masterful personality, which made him for over a full decade the arbiter of the destinies of his people in West Bengal and got him recognition as one of the strong men and unquestioned leaders in Free India, was a man not in a million but in ten millions, and an outstanding figure who, without flippancy, can be described as a veritable "whale among minnows". Within the frame of the parliamentary democracy which Free India had adopted for herself, circumstances beyond anybody's control put him in the place of a virtual dictator for his state, with the willing co-operation and even applauding support of the ruling political Party, the Indian National Congress, which had formed the spearhead in winning freedom for India, supported by Mahatmaji on one side and Subhas Bose on the other, with their outwardly conflicting but in the long run mutually complementary attitudes, politics and policies in the attainment of liberty for India. In any country there are great men in different spheres, and sometimes comparisons would be meaningless. The only person, however, at any rate on this side of India, who challenges comparison with Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy is Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, great as a judge and a jurist, as a scholar and educationst, and social reformer and nationalist, who was instrumental in revolutionizing higher university education in India and inspired higher studies and research in both the human and the physical sciences working through the University of Calcutta under tremendous difficulties. Sir Asutosh Mookerjee's successful way of running for over a decade the affairs of the University of Calcutta, a true *imperium in imperio,* was an achievement comparable with what

Dr B. C. Roy did in a wider sphere in carrying on the administration of a major state in India under circumstances of unforeseen obstructions and handicaps.

Before I passed out of college in 1913, like many other residents of Calcutta I had heard about Dr B. C. Roy, as one of the top-ranking medical practitioners of Bengal and India who was already one of the galaxy of the most distinguished physicians and surgeons of the city, like Sir Nilratan Sircar, Dr Kedarnath Das, Dr Suresh Prasad Sarbadhikari, Dr Bamandas Mukherji, Dr Indu Madhab Mallik, Dr Susil Kumar Mukherji, Dr Panchanan Chatterji, Dr Lalit Mohan Banerji, Dr Subodh Datta and others, most of whom have long passed away. We learned with feelings of joy and pride that, like many of his contemporaries, his expert knowledge and skill would be requisitioned at very high fees all over India. In our student days, and after I started life as Professor in 1914, Dr B. C. Roy was, first and foremost, a physician ; and although, as a nationalist who wanted his people to be rehabilitated and his country to become free, he had started to take part in politics, he never wholly abandoned the discipleship of Dhanwantari to attach himself body and soul to the service of Kautilya. His greatness as a physician was always a hope and an asset for the sick and suffering humanity in India, and till the last he used to spend two hours in the morning treating, free, patients suffering from all sorts of ailments who could not get relief elsewhere. This was indeed a most remarkable instance of his large-hearted charity for those who needed his help in his own field of specialization. In this matter, he did not make any distinction—the highest in the land down to the most humble were all served by him after he dropped his practice for fees—he only took note of the gravity or seriousness of the ailment.

On one occasion, I was with Dr Roy in a North Indian town on some official business. Dr Roy was not particularly interested in the matter which was to be deliberated upon, and he took me with him because it fell within my range of studies. We went by air. Dr Roy went as the local authorities were very importunate in asking him to come, but one could see he was bored from the very start, and returned to Calcutta the next morning, not spending more than a couple of hours at the meeting specially called. After he left, I asked an eminent person who had also

Examining an album of Gandhi stamps issued in the U. S. A. on 26 January 1961 in the Champions of Liberty series and presented to him by the U. S. Consul-General in Calcutta

Examining the musical instrument of a Baul
For preserving the folk music of Bengal, the Government of West Bengal founded in 1952 a folk entertainment centre.

attended the meeting what good did it do to anybody to force Dr Roy to come and waste a whole day. But he said, "You are mistaken. It did a lot of good to a number of people." As a matter of fact, as he explained, Dr Roy's presence in the town was taken advantage of by all the big people—top-ranking ones in the administrative set up—to have a free check-up. I then remembered—when we were entering the premises where we had our meeting, I had noticed two distinguished-looking men with stethescopes in their pockets—well-known doctors in the city who were waiting for Dr Roy to arrange some consultations with him.

And then there was the case of an humble clerk from Bengal who came and approached me with the greatest anxiety and trepidation if I could persuade Dr Roy to be so kind as to see his sick wife who was in the local hospital; the local doctors could not diagnose her case, and he was in despair. I spoke to Dr Roy about it—he knit his brows a little and said that every minute of his time he had already fixed for seeing somebody or other. But when I told him that it was a poor clerk who thought his wife's case was desperate, he said—"All right. Ask his doctors to prepare a short history, and I shall start earlier and spend some time at the hospital to see the patient on my way to the airport." The same evening the clerk came to me, and he was almost in tears with gratitude—he said that the careful and sympathetic way in which Dr Roy looked into the case made the patient believe she was on her way to recovery—Dr Roy suggested to the doctors a course of treatment, and wanted them to send reports of the progress to Calcutta for the next few days.

So it was in this way that Bidhan Chandra Roy served his people to the last in the special field of competence in which he was supreme—in the art of healing.

I appear to have digressed even at the outset, but thinking of the great-hearted generosity and fellow-feeling of the man I could not do otherwise. In the course of a personal tribute to his memory, one cannot take up all or even the salient aspects of his life and career and achievement; this can be done only in a proper biography. In the University, near about fifty years ago, I came in touch with his personality, as a junior professor-lecturer in the University Post-Graduate Department, then started by Sir Asutosh Mookerjee in 1914 as an innovation in the traditions and annals of Univer-

sity education in India. Dr Roy, with his towering personality, was there, as a Fellow, as a member of the Senate and then of the Syndicate, as President of the Board of Accounts. He became Vice-Chancellor in 1942, and later President of the Council of Post-Graduate Teaching in Science, and a Life-Member of the University. We as members of the University Staff now had more occasions to meet him in committees. Two things impressed us from the beginning. He was quick to grasp the essentials, and he was quick in action. A man of few words, he had a imperious way about him, and he was impatient of circumlocution. We had of course much more to do with Sir Asutosh Mookerjee during all the years of his intimate connection with the University which he himself had built up, from 1911 when we joined the University service to his death in 1924. Nevertheless, we always respected Dr Roy as a towering personality, who had made his mark not only in his profession of a physician, but also as an educationist, an administrator, and also as a political leader.

It was from 1952 that I could come into close touch with Dr B. C. Roy, and that was in a rather different sphere of activity outside the University. As Chairman of the Upper House, I could have close glimpses of Dr Roy's personality and character. For all and sundry, in the first instances he was a man who could always be looked up to and relied upon, if he felt interested in a particular matter or was convinced of the reasonableness or justice of a cause. He had a fund of good humour, and his robust manliness made it easy for him to ignore bickerings and criticisms and hecklings in the course of legislative forensics or tirades, but he could sometimes flare up and be aggressively vehement. But if he was approached in any particular matter in a spirit of fellowship and co-operation, he was always affable, and oppositionists of all parties made full and I should say legitimate use of this human aspect of Dr Roy's personality, much to the relief of the presiding officers in the two Houses which otherwise would continue to be anything but peaceful and harmonious. Many important bills and measures could be finally drafted through this spirit of compromise which was certainly helped by Dr Roy's great common sense and practical wisdom. In his personal dealings, he would always be kind and affable, and would never be sour-tempered. It was common knowledge that some of the members in the two houses (as well as outside, in other spheres of public

life) would provoke him deliberately, but later on would meet him in private and try to make amends by relying on his generous sentiments.

Dr Roy's sturdy common sense we could see in other ways also. He had a strong bias for cultural values as much as for the scientific and the economic in life, and that is why he started new Universities, here one with a strong leaning towards science and technology and agriculture, and there for the humanities and the arts including dance and the drama. Being a graduate of the University of Calcutta trained in the good old curricula which were current before the "reforms" of 1907, he passed his Entrance Examination, and two years after he had studied the "First Arts" Course he passed on to higher graduation studies. Up to the "First Arts" Course—corresponding to the later "Intermediate" Course in Arts or Science—mathematics, science, Sanskrit or a classical language and history were compulsory for all students. Dr Roy studied Sanskrit in the First Arts and he evidently studied it well, and had developed a liking for the language and its literature as being essentially necessary as a formative influence in our college students. In this he was confirmed by the opinion of Rabindranath Tagore also; and he thought that for a Bengali student a knowledge of Sanskrit was necessary if he wanted to use his mother tongue to better purpose. On one occasion, at a conference of Sanskrit scholars and others who urged upon the retention of Sanskrit as a compulsory subject throughout the higher Secondary stage, a view to which he wholeheartedly subscribed, Dr Roy set forth his own opinion why Sanskrit should continue as a compulsory subject. We were struck by his great common sense in this matter—Sanskrit was necessary to enable an Indian student to keep a living touch with his national thought and culture; and it was necessary for all the Indians in developing their languages. In the course of his arguments, we were all surprised and pleased to see this great student of science and expert in the healing art roll out sonorous Sanskrit verses from the *Rāmāyana* and other works which he had studied at school and college, and expanded their meaning—how the great ethical teachings and spiritual concepts in the verses like these he read could have an abiding influence for good in men's lives.

Dr Roy was appreciative of English literature too— what he had read at college remained in his memory, and on several occasions, as I found

it, it stood him in good stead by enabling him to clinch an argument or to make an effective peroration to an otherwise sober and businesslike speech. He had an eye on style also.

Dr Roy had large interests, the interests of the cultured man in many matters that concerned humanity. I recall with a very pleasant though poignant association the many long talks I had with him, either in his room in the Writers' Buildings or in the Legislative Building, or in his residence, on problems relating to languages and literatures not only of India but also of the outside world, to social and cultural contacts and developments, to philosophy and religion. His was an inquisitive mind and I flatter myself that he followed my way of exposition. He was so kind and sympathetic—time and often in formal dinners and receptions he would make a very kind reference to me before foreign guests and dignitaries, stressing upon my linguistic interests. He knew indeed how to show his elder-brotherly and cultural as well as historical concern for his juniors who were associated with him.

We gauge the grandeur of a mountain by its highest peaks, and from that point of view, Dr. B. C. Roy was unquestionably a Great Man, and one of the Greatest Sons of Bengal and India at the present age. May his memory continue to be fresh and green for ever!

SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI

Office of the Chairman
West Bengal Legislative Council

3

Born and nurtured in an environment charged with the spirit of public service and equipped with a brilliant academic record in medicine and surgery, Bidhan Chandra came into the public life of this country through the arena of education as provided by the University of Calcutta. Indeed, he plunged into the educational affairs of Bengal much earlier than into politics, and till the end of his life, despite his increasing preoccupation with professional work as a leading physician and with politics, he retained his active interest in education and maintained an intimate contact with educational institutions, organizations and movements in Bengal, and worked for them. A few of the visible instances of his active and abiding interest in education are the following: the expansion of the medical colleges of Bengal ; the orientation of medical education in this country ; the introduction of diversified and specialized higher courses in medicine, surgery and public health ; the organization of the first non-governmental medical college in Bengal, now known as the R. G. Kar Medical College ; the transformation of the College of the National Council of Education into Jadavpur University ; the establishment and rearing up of the Indian Institute of Technology at Kharagpur, the Institute of Jute Technology, the Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management, Burdwan, Kalyani, North Bengal and Rabindra-Bharati Universities. By training and temperament he was a man of science, especially of applied science and technology, and was not therefore given to speculation on the theoretical aspects of education. He looked upon education as a means of achieving certain social ends in a given social situation. He believed that in the social conditions in which he found himself, the immediate ends that education was expected to meet could be met mainly through the applied and professional sciences, that is, through education and training in medicine, technology, engineering, industry, business management, etc.

His constructive attempts in this field were, therefore, directed chiefly along these channels. But one must not assume that he had no interest at all in the fundamental sciences, in the fine arts and the humanities, and in the general principles and problems of education. True to the ideas and ideals of Asutosh Mookerjee, who had launched him in the field of education, Bidhan Chandra was a great believer in academic freedom and in the autonomy of universities, an ideal for which he fought at the University of Calcutta, and, on her behalf, in the Bengal Legislature and outside, during the twenties. In his convocation address at Lucknow University, in 1956, he declared himself decidedly against purely economic motivation and aim of education ; more than once, in the course of his convocation addresses, at Calcutta University and at the Visvabharati, for instance, he gave out in clear terms his conception of the role of education in a democratic society, namely, the promotion of international understanding, freedom and peace. His concern for and patronage of Rabindra-Bharati Society, the State Academy of Dance, Drama and Music, and, later, the Rabindra-Bharati University, testify to his love for the finer aspects of the nation's culture and education.

With no other educational institution or organization was Bidhan Chandra's association so close and continuous as with the University of Calcutta. He was elected an ordinary Fellow of this University, at the instance of Asutosh Mookerjee, as early as in 1916, at a time when members nominated by the Government constituted more than eighty per cent of the Senate ; he continued to be a Fellow till 13 March 1942 (when he became Vice-Chancellor) with but a brief break in 1930, when he resigned in protest against the then Vice-Chancellor's exhortation to the students, asking them *not* to join the Civil Disobedience Movement. When his two years' term as Vice-Chancellor came to a close on 12 March 1944, he became a Life-Member of the Senate, a position which he held to the last day of his life, not merely as an insignia of honour and dignity but as an active and interested elder ever-anxious to further the cause of the University. For a term he was President of the Council of Post-Graduate Teaching in Science, a position to which he was elected in 1945 ; and he was President of the

Board of Accounts for a little over a decade (1924-1934), when the finances of the University were at a very low ebb and it had to fight, under his leadership, a strenuous battle on that account with not too sympathetic and benign a Government. He was also a member of the Syndicate continuously from 1934 to 1952, a position which he had to give up later because of his increasing preoccupation as the Chief Minister of West Bengal. Even so he never forgot his *alma mater* and his sound advice was always available in times of need. Those of us who have been associated with the University for long, remember and acknowledge with gratitude how, in moments of difficulties, he would listen to us affectionately and attentively, sometimes with evident concern, and suggest whatever remedies he could think of. More often than not he would take immediate action and see us out of our difficulties. It was solely through his efforts, when he became Chief Minister, that the University of Calcutta received a statutory grant of rupees sixteen lakhs a year, and he continued to persuade the Government to add further to the amount to enable the University to tide over its occasional difficulties.

Equally important is the fight he carried on, on behalf of the University, in the Bengal Legislative Council, to which he had been elected for the first time in 1923 in a straight contest with Surendranath Banerjea. Later, for quite a number of years, he represented the registered graduates of the University in the Legislature, upholding always the cause of this University with dignity and force.

Bidhan Chandra became a member of the Senate at a time when a new chapter of the eventful history of Calcutta University, and, for that matter, of the history of higher education in this country, was about to be written. Not very long after he had taken his seat in the Legislative Council, the Government of India appointed, without consulting the Senate, a committee of seven members with Asutosh Mookerjee as its Chairman, to enquire into the post-graduate teaching under the University. The committee produced a report, the main purpose of which was (1) to enunciate the general policy of "an intimate association and co-operation" between the post-graduate teachers of the colleges that had been offering post-

graduate courses and of the University itself, and (2) to create a suitable organization for supervision and control of post-graduate education. The report of the committee was considered and debated upon at three consecutive meetings of the Senate on 17 March, 31 March and 14 April, 1917. As Chairman of the committee and the initiator of the idea of post-graduate teaching and research in India, Asutosh was naturally very keen on giving a concrete shape and form to the gains he had already made in this direction, and that as early as possible. But there was formidable opposition to this, from no less a person than Gooroodas Banerjee, an ex-Vice-Chancellor. A series of amendments were proposed. Gooroodas argued that the amendments had all been proposed in earnestness, and that it was only fair that nothing should be rushed through. Bidhan Chandra seems to have agreed with Gooroodas ; he also felt that, "there was a feeling, whether justifiable or not I cannot say, that matters were being rushed through". But Asutosh won his case eventually, and the foundation of centralized post-graduate teaching and research, as obtains at Calcutta University today, was laid. Bidhan Chandra's opposition, it should be pointed out, was not so much to Asutosh's proposals as to the speed with which they were being sought to be adopted. For, on two later occasions when the post-graduate departments of the University had to face two major trials, once in 1925, within a year of Asutosh's death and again in 1930, we find Bidhan Chandra stoutly defending the cause of the post-graduate departments of study and pleading for their stabilization.

But the extent to which Bidhan Chandra had committed himself to the educational policy and programme of Calcutta University and stood by her loyally and faithfully will be evident from the way he fought for them at the Senate and at the Bengal Legislative Council. On 1 March 1922, the Minister of Education, Provas Chunder Mitter, while proposing the acceptance of the education budget by the Council, made a scathing attack on, among other things, the "financial management" of the University and its "thoughtless expansion" of the post-graduate studies. Two days later, on 3 March 1922, when echoes of the Minister's words had not yet died down, Bidhan Chandrda gave notice of a motion for consideration by the Syndicate to the effect that the "tone" of the Education Minister's speech was "deplorable" and "that under the Act the Senate was the sole authority

for outlining the educational policy of the University", implying that the Government had no authority to criticize that policy or to sit in judgement on it. Thereupon, Nilratan Sircar, who had just vacated the chair of the Vice-Chancellor, proposed a committee of seven members, with Bihan Chandra as one of them, to "draw up a statement on the points arising in connection with the speech referred to in the resolution proposed by Dr B. C. Roy". The Senate at its meeting on 13 March 1922 accepted the motion of Nilratan Sircar, postponing consideration of Bidhan Chandra's motion for one month during which time the committee was asked to submit its report.

On 29 April 1923, this committee made a unanimous report explaining the "financial management" of the University. The report underlined the niggardly contribution of the Government of India and met fully the charge of "thoughtless expansion". The committee was also of the opinion that the University had given no occasion to the Government for their irritation, and recorded that the tone and language of the Minister of Education had been "unfortunate".

Earlier, on 29 August 1921, a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, Rishindranath Sarkar, had moved a resolution, which was adopted by a majority of 55 against 41, purporting the appointment of a committee to "enquire into and report on the general working of the University, in particular its financial administration, and recommend such urgent measuures or reforms as may be necessary". The Government of Bengal sent a communication to the University on the subject of this resolution, which was evidently interpreted as an affront to the honour and prestige of the University. The Senate at its meeting on 25 March 1922, therefore, appointed a committee consisting of Asutosh Mookerjee, Nilratan Sircar, Giris Chandra Bose, Asutosh Chaudhuri, Hiralal Haldar, James Watt, George Howells, Bidhan Chandra Roy and Jatindranath Mitra, to report on the points raised in the communication of the Government and the resolution of Rishindranath Sarkar. The committee submitted its report to the Senate on 8 July 1922, in which it dealt with the charges against the University made by some of the members in the Legislature, and maintained that "the assertions are indefinite, unsupported by evidence, and, consequently, incapable of contradiction". The report also dealt with the causes

which had brought about the financial difficulties of the University during the previous ten years and suggested measures for wiping out the accumulated deficit and for restoring its financial equilibrium. The Senate, at its meeting on 29 July 1922, unanimously adopted the report.

While the Government of Bengal relented somewhat, as may be surmised from the additional grant extended to the University for the year, a letter was nevertheless sent to it, subjecting the additional grant "to certain conditions to be fulfilled by the University which must accept the recommendations of the Accountant General, Bengal". Reacting unfavourably, the Senate, at its meeting on 9 September 1922, appointed a committee of nine to consider and report on the letter from the Government and the report of the Accountant General. Of this committee too Bidhan Chandra was elected a member, along with Asutosh Mookerjee, Nilratan Sircar and others. The unanimous report of the committee, which found in the letter of the Government and the report of the Accountant-General an insidious attempt to curtail the autonomy of the University, was presented before a meeting of the Senate on 8 December 1922, and was adopted by a large majority. The Senate debate on the occasion was historic in significance, and Asutosh as Vice-Chancellor made one of his most memorable addresses.

But this was no end of the woes of the University and her struggles with the then Government of Bengal. After Asutosh, Bhupendranath Basu became the Vice-Chancellor on 9 June 1923, and he got immediately involved in two things: (a) the question of financial assistance to the University by the Government, and (b) the question of legislation regarding the reform of the University. On both these counts the University found herself again and again in conflict with the Government. Committee after committee were appointed by the Senate and the Syndicate of the University to formulate the policies and prepare the brief of the University, and hardly there ever was any of which Bidhan Chandra was not a member. Indeed, he had already become one of the leading spokesmen of the University. When Bhupendranath Basu took up as Vice-Chancellor, there were before the Bengal Legislature two non-official amending bills, both dealing with the composition of the Senate, and purporting to increase the percentage of Muslim representation and that of the members of the Legislative

Council, and proposing to make the Education Minister of Bengal *ex-officio* Rector of the University. The Senate appointed a committee of fourteen members to examine the two bills and report on them. Bidhan Chandra was one of the members. The unanimous report of the committee, which opposed all the main provisions of the two bills, was also unanimously adopted by the Senate. Among other things the report opposed the proposal of appointing the Education Minister of Bengal as *ex-officio* Rector of the University, since Assam was at that time under the jurisdiction of Calcutta University and the Governor of Assam was an *ex-officio* member of the Senate of Calcutta University. The report pointed out that the bills, if passed into Acts, would place the Education Minister of Bengal above the Governor of Assam. The idea of having the Education Minister of Bengal as *ex-officio* Rector of the University was dropped, but the matter did not rest there. The Government of Bengal had two official bills on the legislative anvil, one dealing with Calcutta University and the other with Secondary Education, in both of which the Government of Assam were also concerned and interested. The Government of Assam were not yet in a position to have a University of their own ; they still needed the help of Calcutta University and they believed that they had a right to that help. They were, therefore, not in favour of the appointment of a committee by the Government of Bengal as a preliminary to legislation. But in respect of Secondary Education, they were quite prepared to have the Matriculation Examination of the candidates from Assam High schools conducted by Calcutta University, even if the Bengal Secondary Education Bill of 1923 were passed and adopted by the Bengal Legislative Council. But this involved questions of constitutional law and certain legal liabilities on the part of Calcutta University. At the meeting of the Senate, held on 11 June 1923, Bidhan Chandra, therefore, moved "that the Government of Bengal be requested to make a reference to the Government of India to ascertain their views regarding our legal liabilities on the question raised by the Government of Assam . . ." ; his motion was carried, which eventually led to the clearing up of the matter between the two Governments.

These were, financially speaking, dark years for the University of Calcutta. Faced with a deficit budget every year, the University repeatedly approached the Government for financial assistance, and the

Government, critical of the financial management of the University and of the rapid expansion of its activities, tried every time to dodge their financial responsibility by proposing to the University retrenchment of its staff and curtailment of its activities. On 27 February 1924, the Government wrote to the University proposing a conference between the University and the Government in regard to the request of the University for financial assistance. The Syndicate at its meeting on 1 March 1924 welcomed this proposal and nominated the Vice-Chancellor, Bhupendranath Basu, Asutosh Mookerjee, Nilratan Sircar, Bidhan Chandra Roy and Pramathanath Banerjee to represent the University at the Conference.

But, meanwhile, in 1923, Bidhan Chandra had already been elected a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, mainly at the instance of Asutosh Mookerjee. It was naturally expected that a young and sturdy spokesman like him would be able to plead the case of the University in the Legislature with knowledge and reason as much as with force and vigour. He more than fulfilled this expectation ; from 1924 to 1928 he hardly ever lost any opportunity to place the case of Calcutta University before the Legislature and ask for better and more reasonable and sympathetic consideration of the problems that faced this oldest and biggest of the universities in India. His speeches[1] were always well-informed, full of facts and his arguments cogent and precise. Yet they were not altogether devoid of emotion, nor forgetful of the wider perspective of moral, national and academic interests.

On 28 March 1928, while speaking on the Demand for Medical Grants, Bidhan Chandra made a reference to the very niggardly grant extended to the Carmichael (now R. G. Kar) Medical College, an amount that was "too little for the number of patients that were being treated and the number of students that were being taught." Apart from other arguments that he put forward his main plea was moral. "The reason why I put forward this question . . . is that I maintain that every Government have got certain legal liabilities and that their moral liabilities are even greater than their

[1] Some of these speeches, from which brief excerpts have been quoted in this article, are reproduced in this book in the section, "The Battle of Freedom", pp. 147-85.

legal ones. Legal liabilities can be decided, and adjusted in a court of law but no lawyer can help the parties to obtain justice when moral liabilities are concerned."

Years ago, in 1922, as a signatory to the Government Grant Committee Report submitted to the Senate of Calcutta University, Bidhan Chandra said: "We desire to emphasize that if education is to be our policy as a nation, it must not be guided by politics: freedom is its very life-blood, the condition of its growth, the secret of its success; it demands liberty as well as support. . . ." He stuck to these words when on 13 August 1925 he moved in the Council for reference to a Select Committee the Dacca University (Amendment) Bill, 1925, introduced by Sir Abd-ur-Rahim, making provision of a statutory annual grant of rupees five lakhs and a half to Dacca University. His opposition to Sir Abd-ur-Rahim was mainly on the grounds of the latter's appeal to communal feelings, introduction of political considerations in matters academic, stepmotherly treatment of Calcutta University in respect of financial assistance and disparity of salaries of teachers in the two universities.

Six days later, on 19 August 1925, he was again on his legs in the Council, moving for provision in the supplementary budget of a grant of rupees three lakhs only to enable the University to meet their recurring deficit. He analysed the financial situation of the University as clearly as possible, traced the history and causes that led to such a situation and argued why the University should have a recurring non-votable annual grant so as to ensure security to the employees and enable the University to plan for the future. He was most concerned "about retaining academic freedom", about which he quoted from respectable and distinguished authorities. "I am anxious that in securing grants the University must not lose its freedom and initiative. There should be the least possible Government interference. If the University has to come to the Council every year for the annual grant, if the University . . . has to depend upon the chance voting, it will be difficult for it to work efficiently. . . . This might hamper the freedom of the University."

Less than two years later Bidhan Chandra had another occasion to speak in the Legislature on this question of academic freedom in the context of attempted interference by the Government in the affairs of Calcutta Univer-

sity. Manmathanath Ray, one of his colleagues in the Senate as well as in the Legislature, moved, on 23 March 1927, for a token cut to the demand for grant to Calcutta University as a protest against an attempt to officialize the administration of the University. Bidhan Chandra joined in this protest and presented a pointed and spirited refutation of the facts and arguments of the Government as had been put forward by Provas Chunder Mitter and the then Director of Public Instruction, E. F. Oaten.

Since the inauguration of Calcutta University, the post of its Vice-Chancellor had been an honorary one, but, in 1928, the Government of Bengal proposed that the University should have a salaried Vice-Chancellor and made a budgetary demand for a grant towards the salary. This was considered by many, including a nominated and a European Member who usually voted with the Government, as one more step towards officialization of the University. Saral Kumar Datta, a Swarajya Party Member, put in a motion (22 March 1928) refusing the budgetary demand for such a grant, and Bidhan Chandra used his pursuasive tongue in support of the motion. Apart from the argument that time was not yet to have a wholetime salaried Vice-Chancellor, especially in the context of other more pressing and urgent needs, his objection was that "the recommendation had not come from the University, they had never wanted a salaried Vice-Chancellor", and "that the Senate was never asked to give its opinion on the subject". This, he considered, was "a cruel infringement on the freedom of the University for which we . . . fought and will fight to the last."

A few days later, on 26 March 1928, Aziz-ul Haque moved for a token cut to the demand for grants to Calcutta University. The object of the motion was to draw the attention of the House to the inadequacy of the grant, compared to that made to Dacca University. Bidhan Chandra gave a strong support to this motion, not because he had any complaint against the amount of grant extended to Dacca University—"let Dacca University get as much as it gets or even more, but let Calcutta University also get what it deserves and what it needs." He was afraid that the attitude of the Government towards Calcutta University had hardened "because this University had taken a definite step towards—if I may use the term—Indianization of the services under its control", because they find it difficult to "condone the practices of this University to confine the appoint-

ment of professors and lecturers under these trust funds to Indians only."

It is clear that, apart from academic freedom and freedom from interference by the Government of the day in the administration of the University which he fought for in the Senate and the Legislature, he was very keenly interested in finding ways and means to secure financial assistance for the University and in looking after its financial management. For a little over a decade, from 1924 to 1934, he was President of the Board of Accounts, the Syndicate body that was directly responsible for the financial management of the University, at a time when the finances of the University were none too stable and secure. Like the mistress of a lower middle-class family the University found herself in a situation that made budgeting a difficult problem indeed. Again and again he had to complain of "empty coffers and large demands" and of unfulfilled "promises received from the Government from time to time". "Being in charge of the finances of Calcutta University", he said once in the Legislature, "I know what great difficulty I have in scraping together a rupee here and a rupee three to meet the ordinary expenses, to have a provident fund and give compassionate allowance to the family of those who have served the University well and faithfully for a large number of years and who die in harness. Every time we have got to find out ways and means to give a little relief . . ." Yet it stands to his credit that eventually he succeeded in extending the benefit of the provident fund and compassionate allowance schemes to the employees of the University, and in tiding over crisis after crisis; indeed living through crises was the University's lot in those days. His grasp of details and his uncanny memory helped him to carry the revenue and expenditure figures on his finger-tips, and he could mass them and use them most effectively whenever there was any occasion to do so. Those of us who had the privilege of working with him at the University when he was President of the Board of Accounts or Vice-Chancellor, know and remember how easily and amazingly he used to go into the details of a case or present the annual accounts and budgetary estimates without the help of elaborate files and records.

As Vice-Chancellor and President of the Council of Post-Graduate Teaching in Science for a term, he followed the policy of Asutosh and Syamaprasad Mookerjee, and helped to stabilize the departments of post-graduate studies, the printing and publication departments and the university libraries. But his most important contribution was towards the diversification and stabilization of higher medical, technological and business studies. Even when he had become Chief Minister of West Bengal and could hardly afford the time and had little opportunity to keep in close touch with the University, he managed to keep an eye on the development of these studies and extended to them every encouragement and patronage. He encouraged and helped in the foundation of post-graduate studies in basic medical sciences at the University, and continued to be the President of the Board of Management of the Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management till the last day of his life. Two of the final and significant acts of his were the laying of the foundation-stones of the University College of Medicine and of the Centenary Building of the University.

NIHARRANJAN RAY

The University of Calcutta

In this house Dr Roy lived and died

He made a gift of it a few days before his death, for running a nursing home after the name of his mother, Valentina Roy

4

Dr Roy had an iron constitution and worked for long hours without tiring. At Writers' Buildings almost every day he gave interviews to over hundred people and presided over a dozen meetings and conferences and disposed of hundreds of files. But he seemed never to allow too many thoughts to assail him at the same time. As soon as an interview was over and a conference was concluded he seemed to lock up the issues raised at that interview or conference in one compartment of his brain and, temporarily deferring them to be dealt with at a suitable time, got ready to meet another visitor or to preside over another conference. And so the process went on until he left his desk for the day.

In the midst of his exacting work as Chief Minister, Dr Roy found time every morning to see, free, a number of patients at his residence and to keep himself fully posted with the latest research in the medical world. He used to feel happy over his morning medical practice and did not miss it even for a day when in Calcutta. In this practice he dealt with many interesting and complicated cases to which he applied his profound medical knowledge and skill. When still in full-time practice he was often consulted by people who could afford to pay him a high fee. Wealthy people consulted him often even for minor ailments. His patients at the time of free consultation at his residence came mostly from the poorer sections of the people who suffered from diseases of a complicated nature in the treatment of which Dr Roy took a great interest.

To examine patients early in the morning was not only a lifelong practice but an article of faith with Dr Roy. Even on the day he died, he examined a few patients and advised treatment. He considered this act essential, especially on his birthday.

The working of his mind was an example of good thinking with logical, constructive planning as a result. Some years ago, when the Bengali

residents of Assam were subjected to great oppression by a section of the local people, the leaders of different political parties and other organizations advised Dr Roy on the steps to be taken for the protection of the Bengalis. Dr Roy never allowed himself to be swept off his feet by passion and excitement. Calmly he decided on his line of action and issued statements which were praised in the highest quarters as being mainly responsible for saving the Bengalis in Assam from further trouble and at the same time maintaining law and order in Calcutta and elsewhere in the State.

At a much earlier period, when Mayor of Calcutta, Dr Roy acted firmly and with dignity during heated scenes in the Corporation Building. Passion reached such a height on one occasion that the meeting dispersed amid the throwing of eggs from the public galleries. Some of the missiles hit Dr Roy—and the Press—but he remained unmoved throughout.

At a conference and during interviews Dr Roy invariably gave constructive leadership. He had a thorough grasp of the subject, obtained by previous study, and consideration of the issues likely to be raised. He was also a good listener. Whenever he found that anyone was saying something worth his knowing he listened to him with attention. He encouraged shy people to speak. He had no time for a man who tried to show off. He did not allow any visitor to waste his time over little formalities and other trifles. He expected everyone, whether he was a Government officer or a non-official, to come straight to the point. If a visitor came with a request for financial help to start a factory or a business he asked him to produce the blue print. He then considered all the points connected with the proposal and if satisfied tried to help him.

Only day Dr Roy received a request for an outright grant from an institution. There was no mention of any effort by the institution at raising some money from its members. "Why should the Government help an organization which depends entirely on official assistance?" said Dr Roy to a member of the profession that the institution represented. He then recalled the history of Calcutta University, Jadavpur University, R. G. Kar Medical College and Hospital, Chittaranjan Seva-Sadan, the Cancer Institute and dozens of other institutions which had grown largely through non-official efforts.

The president of a local organization met the Chief Minister and invited

him to open a function. Dr Roy told him that he attended only those functions which had something constructive about them.

Even in the midst of his exacting official duties, he found time to open a bridge, to lay the foundation of a project, to inspect a machine made in India, however small it might be, and to visit sites of proposed plants.

When he came to a big decision he made a thorough study of the problems and did not allow anything to escape his attention. He had a great mastery over facts and figures, a faculty which many in high position lack. His capacity to read and understand engineering plans and blue prints was extraordinary for a layman. The building of the Indian Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management in College Square was constructed in accordance with his ideas. His pencil-scribbled sketch of the building on a piece of paper with calculations by him about the floor space, cost of construction, etc. was framed and hung up on the wall of the museum of the Institute.

Whenever a scheme for an industrial venture was put before him for consideration Dr Roy, with his knowledge of engineering and business management, worked out the economics of the proposal and on that basis accepted or rejected it. Among the important points he took into consideration were the employment potential of the proposed venture, particularly the technical personnel available in the State, and the use of the by-products as a subsidiary industry or industries. He had an amazing capacity for calculating costs, etc. and never accepted others' calculations for granted. He did the calculations himself. He was able to calculate mentally large numbers of figures and very quickly too. It is said that once when he was explaining India's Five-Year Plan to an international and cosmopolitan delegation, Dr Roy simultaneously interpreted the cost of the principal items in sterling, dollars, francs and other currencies.

He intensely loved Calcutta and had an intimate knowledge of the city and its problems. He seemed to know every by-lane, lane and street of the city ; to many he had gone either as a doctor when he went to see a patient or as Mayor during inspection. Kalyani, the Salt Lake Reclamation and the C.M.P.O. all owed their origin to Dr Roy's love for Calcutta.

His relations with the Central Government were very cordial and he

used to get most of his demands sanctioned without much difficulty. Delhi had full faith in Dr Roy's leadership.

West Bengal's development projects continued to be Dr Roy's major preoccupation till the very last day of his life. From his sick-bed he got into touch, over the telephone, with the State Electricity Board's Adviser, Mr A. K. Bhaumik, who was then in Delhi, to meet the members of the Planning Commission in connection with the SEB's Katwa thermal power project. He had also asked Mr Bhaumik to issue orders immediately for the acquisition of land for the power project. This was probably one of the last orders the Chief Minister issued before his death.

Once on a tour of West Germany, Dr Roy visited a pharmaceutical works in Bonn and at the end of the inspection was given a blue leather diary containing a list of the products of the establishment. While flying from Bonn to Frankfurt he looked through the diary and finding a reference to a specific for malaria in which quinine was not used he marked it with his pen. Some years later Vinobaji while touring Bihar fell ill with malaria and refused to take quinine which the doctors from Patna prescribed. Dr Rajendra Prasad, then President, failed to induce him to change his attitude. Dr Prasad contacted Dr Roy in Calcutta over the telephone and requested him to come. An hour and a half before the plane was due to leave Dr Roy sent for one of his officers at Writers' Buildings and, after telling him how he had found a reference to a German specific for malaria but had forgotten its name, asked him to go to his consultation room at his residence, retrieve the blue leather-bound diary from the third drawer on the right hand side of his desk, look up the name of the specific, get it from a particular chemists' shop and give it to him at Dum Dum. True enough, the officer found the diary at the specified place, got the name of the specific marked as stated, and went to the chemists' store. But the medicine had not yet come on the Calcutta market. The officer rushed to Dum Dum air port and reported to Dr Roy the result of his mission. Unperturbed Dr Roy left for Bihar, saw Vinobaji and restored him to health after treatment. It is not known whether the medicine he prescribed contained quinine or not. Perhaps not.

"Tomorrow is my birthday; I may come round tomorrow," Dr Roy told one of his attending physicians the night before his death.

Dr Roy felt a pain in his heart a week before his death and consulted Dr Jogesh Gupta, the well-known cardiologist, and other attending physicians. The cardiograph prominently indicated "posterior infraction". Dr Roy was told about a "mild heart attack". But next day the cardiograph showed an improvement of his condition. "Look, I have no ailment," he said, his eyes fixed on the cardiograph. Cardiographs were taken daily three or four times and these gradually indicated a worsening of the heart condition. But Dr Roy continued to maintain that he was all right.

The Governor, Miss Naidu, settled a point with Dr Roy, after reference to the Constitution through a lawyer. Miss Naidu insisted that nobody should be allowed to see Dr Roy the following day, his birthday.

"Why?" asked Dr Roy.

"For health reasons," said the Governor.

"If it is for health reasons, I should be a better judge," said Dr Roy.

Finding it difficult to persuade Dr Roy to agree to her proposal, Miss Naidu turned to Mr Subimal Chandra Roy, barrister, and Dr Roy's nephew, and said: "You are a big lawyer. What is the constitutional position? Can a Chief Minister ignore the Governor's orders?"

"Certainly not," said Mr Roy. "The Constitution is clear about it."

"All right, all right, I will act as I am asked by the Governor," Dr Roy said with a smile.

Dr Roy's attachment to life and his great faith in medical science were also demonstrated during his last days. Two days before his death he complained that the dull pain in his legs was persisting. "When I come round I shall go through the latest books on the subject and I am sure I will find the cause of the pain."

Only one and a half hours before his death, Dr Roy was studying the Extra Pharmacopoeia to find why his tongue had dried up the previous night after he had been administered pethidine.

A little after 10 a.m. that last Sunday, Dr Roy asked Dr Anil Chandra Roy, who had been associated with him for the past 34 years, to bring the book. His sleep had been disturbed four times during the night because he felt thirsty.

As it was not clear from the book that pethidine could have caused such a thirst, Dr Roy asked the attending physicians about its possible effects. After his discussion with them he was satisfied that this particular group of medicine might cause thirst.

Fifteen minutes before the end came, he complained of breathing difficulty. An oxygen tent was requisitioned and a doctor tried to insert the tubes into his nostrils. He was determined not to show any signs of weakness. And he died with the tubes in his firm grip.

About four hours before his death, Dr Roy took a copy of Brahmo Sangeet and sang a piece from it. Those by his side did not then listen attentively.

They are now sorry that they were inattentive. During prayers held at present in the room where he died, his relatives sing from the book his favourite songs and hope that these include the one sung by Dr Roy before his death.

G. E. Powell

The Statesman House
Calcutta

The author of this article gratefully acknowledges the help in writing it given to him by his colleagues, past and present, in the Calcutta Press.

5

"I SAY, have they given you the report?" he enquired.

"Then you better put it like this: This afternoon. . . ." This was Dr B. C. Roy dictating over the telephone from Raj Bhavan. The Prime Minister, sitting close by, was listening to him. He took over the instrument.

"Look, this is P. M. Now, don't say all that Dr Roy has just been telling you. You take down . . . (and, here he dictates) . . . . Tell it to them. You know what I mean. And, now your Chief Minister wants to speak to you."

Dr Roy's relations with the Prime Minister were always those of absolute affection and perfect understanding. Yet, when he took over the telephone, he said:

"I authorize you to do as the Prime Minister has told you." And, when he was putting away the instrument, one could still hear Dr Roy telling the Prime Minister, "Thanks for the draft. He still needed my authority to issue it."

That was Dr Roy's sense of discipline. He wanted his officers to take orders from one single authority and not to go about seeking directions everywhere. His own orders were firm and not likely to be changed once given by him. When he gave orders he himself took full responsibility which gave that abiding sense of confidence among those who worked with him.

Dr Roy expected every one to be as well-informed as he himself always was.

"Ay, this man here wants to see you. I am sending him to you." That was eight in the night. Who was he who wanted to come? This you had to find from his Personal Assistant there and then. The rest was your

business. If he knew you could do it, his directions were brief. If he thought you couldn't, he would give all the details. It was a sort of understanding; his method varied from person to person.

Once very late on a wet cold winter night came his voice over the phone:

"I say, so and so is here and says that the roof is leaking."

"Which roof, Sir?"

"In the camp building, isn't it?"

"Then, Sir, it is so and so who is looking after. I am in the other sector."

"I know it. You get them to attend to it at once." If you were visible to him more often than others, you carried a larger load than others. But he liked those who made themselves useful and relied more and more on them. He knew some at least could always do a lot more than what was given to them, and often more efficiently.

Dr Roy never stopped working. Visiting a new building he would ask you to make a note of the shade of paint, of the design of grills, any new gadget, a well produced report or any idea which could be used in future. Escorting him to the Rotunda, the usual venue of meetings in Writers' Buildings, one had to be ready to take a note of various and varied instructions as he walked along, often quite fast.

"These hangings should have been removed ages ago. If it is a reminder he is waiting for, then he should get one now."

"Why can't we have some sort of uniform benches or stools for these battalions of chaprasis? All manner of odd things are here making an ugly sight. Tell the Furniture Store people to see me."

"Yes," pausing to look at a name plate, "this is the man I have been waiting for. It is past six, will he be still in? Ask him to come to my room after this meeting."

"This place is always so dark. Why can't they put some fluorescent lights. Please tell the Electric people to bring up a proposal. It is more economical to use those lights, you know."

"I see this enclosure every time I come here. Months ago I told them to make a new one, low and something nice. Ask them what has happened

to it? They move so slow."

"That is the placard I do not like. The language should be more polite, letters should be clear and bold and it should be neatly hung up. They wouldn't do it. You get it re-done for them, will you?"

The notebook was already full. The following day short notes will have to be sent to all concerned, the orders of the 'mobile court'.

And, as he would be entering the Rotunda, right in front of him would be the man who had most wanted to escape his notice.

"I say, you have not brought back that file."

"Sir, I am collecting all the papers."

"You and your papers, they will never meet. Please, for God's sake, you come to me with my papers tomorrow. I cannot wait endlessly."

He did not like delays, but he disliked those who caused delays even more.

A demonstration was being held on the Old Court House Street. There was the usual demand to march to Writers' Buildings with banners and placards. Slogans were being raised and the traffic obstructed. Ultimately, four persons were permitted to go and present a memorandum to the Chief Minister. They were excited and spoke in angry tone. Dr Roy listened to them calmly and then allowed them to go. He assured them, however, that the matter will be looked into. Three deputationists left quickly, visibly satisfied at the success of their mission. One still lingered on. It looked suspicious. What did he want? He came near the table and said, "Sir, I have constant pain and swelling in my neck here, will you please do something about me?" "I have no cure for slogan throats," Dr Roy said smilingly, but asked the man to recline on his table over stacks of files and papers, books and reports. The Doctor in him had taken over from the Chief Minister in his office. He pressed various tender muscles in his 'patient's' neck. "I will give you some medicine", he said pulling out a phial from his bag, "try this for a week and then come to see me at my house, alone and not with a procession this time!" This man was delighted at getting top medical attention and left quickly to join his other colleagues anxiously waiting outside. Here was a man who was demanding that the Chief Minister should come and meet them where the Police had

stopped that procession here he was returning with a promise of freedom from an agonizing disease—not sloganitis though!

In a few spare seconds a stern administrator was a gentle physician. Dr. Roy often told his officers to look at things from the angle of the people who suffered and not to be pretending to be stuff, stern officials round the clock.

Dr. Roy used to rearrange his table several times in a day, destroying unwanted papers and carefully securing others into neat bundles with rubber bands, clips, file binders, of which he always had a large variety. He did not like disorderly junks. While he hated keeping letters and notes with him, he preserved all manner of tidbits: framed pictures, which looked anything but himself; paper weights with mottos like "Get it done—if you cannot do it yourself"; paper cutters, desk stands, scribbling blocks and any number of odd things. They were all over his house on every table, every shelf and some even on the floor. Some pictures had occupied a wall space for thirty years. Someone once dared to suggest that there be a spring cleaning. It hurt him. They were tokens of people's affection. They were felt to be there. How does it worry you? he asked. One day you will come and say, Old man, get out, leave this place, you have been here quite long. You should respect age, respect sentiment. Old associations mean a lot to me, he added. But there was order even in the midst of their chaos. He would stretch out his hand and pull a bunch of old papers and surprise you with his feats of memory. He alone knew where he had kept a particular thing, a book, a diary, or a letter, and woe to those who ever disturbed his things. When it was suggested to him that these could be arranged and listed by him so that he would not have to pump his memory, he said, I am my best index.

Yet his was a memory of associations. Some people he remembered by names, others by face and still some others by the business for which they had met him. He had queer ways of recalling to his mind the people he knew. He had married the father of someone, he had known the father in his [illegible] and in some cases the ancestors of a few. He even remembered those whose method of approach was positively aggressive. He re-

[illegible] reports from their covers, letters from their size and colour of paper.

But he always remembered his own notes on them, which he usually scribbled in one corner or in the margin against the most important issue. Sometimes he forgot to sign, but had put the date all the same. It was rare that he did both in his casual notes. There are some orders which he began writing in blue but finished off in red. Someone must have come to disturb him in between.

In some cases his orders were very brief. See this. See me. See this and see me. The order conveyed all the meaning for those who worked with him, what he wanted and how he wanted it to be done.

Yes, about the association in memory. Once a building was to be requisitioned for a department, but the proposal was dropped after the price, cost of renovation, rentals, etc. had all been worked out. All the details had been carefully noted by Dr Roy himself. Three years hence the proposal came to secure that same building for another office. The file was before Dr Roy and all the facts were there—prices, statements and notes. But Dr Roy would not touch it. That was not his method. The officer who had dealt with this case before was sent for. As soon as he entered his room all the facts came back to Dr Roy's mind and without looking into the file he began to say, "Didn't you tell me this building had three floors, each floor with two thousand square feet of space. The rear portion needed to be demolished. The rental was so much which the owner so and so had accepted."

He remembered cases projected on the person who was dealing with it. His presence brought back all to his mind. Facts for Dr Roy were associated with persons, places and events. That was the secret of his memory. He saw in every file a personality, in every person a soul. Files he often said, were meaningless. It was the person who said the words that counted most. He made the file, the file did not make him.

Dr Roy was extremely fond of flowers, their colour and their fragrance. Say it with flowers was an expression he [illegible] action. Truck loads of flowers used to be procured [illegible] and of these were sent to hospital wards, [illegible] being [illegible]

and supervised by him. He had vases of beautiful flowers on his office desk and pots of exotic foliage in the foyer of his office. The roof-top garden of Writers' Buildings received his attention. A serpentine bed at a government institution in Calcutta was outlined on the ground by him during a visit. The flower board, the rare Orchid collections, the imported Gladioli were all expression of his love for flowers.

Dr Roy's delight at the blooming of the first imported Tulip in the Assembly House nursery was comparable to the first discharge of coke from the Durgapur Ovens, the arrival of pumped silt at the Salt Lakes or the flow of irrigation water from the Tilpara Barrage.

He took special interest in all that he created and tended every new scheme or project like a tender sapling. He could not see all his plants bloom or bear fruit in his lifetime, but he had faith in their future.

For gardeners like him a poet had said:

He who plants a tree plants a hope.
Rootlets up through fibres blindly grope;
So man's life must climb
From the clods of time
Up to heavens sublime.

and, Dr Roy did not have to ask:

Canst thou prophesy, thou little tree,
What the glory of thy boughs shall be?

P. S. MATHUR

Directorate of Publicity
Government of West Bengal

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It was sometime in the beginning of April 1962. I had gone one morning with a load of files to the chamber of Dr B. C. Roy as his Development Commissioner. When we had completed our discussion he asked me to see him again after about an hour for consultation on an important subject, as he said. I thought it must be something connected with my official work, but, as subsequent developments will show, my guess was far wide of the mark.

I reported to him again as desired by him after about an hour. As was his habit, he entered directly into the subject. He said: "I know your inclinations and I believe what I am proposing to you will be acceptable to you. I want you to take over as the Vice-Chancellor of the Rabindra-Bharati University we are going to establish."

What he proposed was so extraordinary that it took me completely by surprise. For some time past I had off and on expressed to him my desire to be permitted to resign from the Government service, and on one occasion I had actually tendered my resignation. But he would never agree to this, and would silence me by simply saying that he wanted my services. For the stature of his personality and his many qualities of head and heart, he commanded my utmost respect and admiration. I could never think of going against his wishes and so I continued, at first as his Rehabilitation Commissioner and afterwards as his Development Commissioner.

His proposal, therefore, came to me as one of the biggest surprises of my life. It was not only unorthodox but the least expected. Judging by his past attitude, it is clear that he was reluctant to part with me as an administrative officer. But here is a cause for which he was prepared to do so. How dear that cause must have been to his heart!

We had known Dr Roy as a great builder in the material sense. He would conceive big projects boldly and get them executed under personal

supervision. Once a decision had been taken to execute a project, no amount of difficulties would deter him from his course. He was a man of firm determination. We had known all this about him, but very few of us knew that he also had a deep appreciation of spiritual values. Rabindranath Tagore represents the quintessence of Indian culture, and so Dr Roy had naturally the highest admiration for him. His establishing the Rabindra-Bharati University brought out into relief his great regard for the values Rabindranath stands for. This is what enabled him to decide to part with me, and consequently my admiration for him grew deeper.

While making the extraordinary proposal to me he said: "This is going to be a University of a new kind. You will get no model to help you and you will have to start from scratch. That is why I wanted a man who has had considerable administrative experience and at the same time has a high regard for Tagore."

I had no difficulty in making my decision. This offered me an opportunity to leave behind the trammels of service life and to devote myself to a cause which I so cherish. I readily agreed. That is how the very difficult task of looking after the Rabindra-Bharati University fell on my shoulders.

Evidently, what inspired him to conceive of a memorial to Rabindranath on a grand scale was his admiration for Tagore's spiritual qualities. However, the idea of founding a University as a memorial to Rabindranath took shape in his mind slowly. It was the outcome of a series of actions initiated by a policy decision taken by him some years ago. In 1952, the State Government adopted a policy introducing a new technique of publicity through entertainment, and, accordingly, a Folk Entertainment Section came into being. This created the problem of training artistes.

Simultaneously another development took place. Sometime after the death, in August 1941, of Rabindranath, the public raised some funds (about Rs. 15 lakhs) under the leadership of Suresh Chandra Majumdar for a fitting memorial to the poet. The Committee entrusted with this work decided to acquire a part of the ancestral property of the Tagore family at Jorasanko and construct a memorial hall there. Accordingly, a part of the premises at number 5, Dwarkanath Tagore Lane, which belonged to a

branch of the family of which Abanindranath was a member, as well as the premises at 6/4, Dwarkanath Tagore Lane were acquired with a portion of the funds, and steps were taken to construct a hall.

In the meantime, the transferee of premises number 5 got an award in appeal for a bigger amount of compensation than what the Land Acquisition Collector had awarded. The Committee had by that time exhausted their funds. In the circumstance, Suresh Chandra Majumdar approached Dr Roy for a grant from the Government. Dr Roy readily agreed to this, and, in view of the need for a training institution for the prospective employees of the Folk Entertainment Section, there was an understanding between them that the Government would utilize the surplus lands for this purpose. That was how on the site of the premises number 6/4, Dwarkanath Tagore Lane came to be built the house known as the Sangeet Bhavan. This was meant to provide accommodation for the Academy of Dance, Drama and Music, which was established in 1955.

The centenary of Rabindranath's birth was meanwhile approaching fast. The State of West Bengal was under an obligation to provide for a fitting memorial to this great son of Bengal who has brought glory to India. So, in 1959, Dr Roy conceived the idea of perpetuating his memory by acquiring the family property and utilizing it for the purpose of establishing a University to bear his name. Steps were thereupon taken for acquiring not only the entire ancestral house but also some of the neighbouring premises for providing a sizeable area for the campus.

Apart from the chain of events which brought him into the affairs of the ancestral house of Rabindranath, Dr Roy had other reasons for taking this momentous decision. One reason was that he felt strongly the need for the preservation of this house as a national trust, for it was here that Rabindranath was born and brought up and breathed his last. Even after he had shifted to Santiniketan to carry on his experiments in education, it was in this house that he continued to reside while in Calcutta. During his stay in Calcutta, the élite of the country would meet him here. Then, again, not only was Rabindranath himself a great man but he was born into a great family, which produced men of distinction in different fields of learning and in the fine arts and culture. The house in which they lived continued, for well over a century, to be the hub of the social and cultural

activities of this part of India. And so Dr Roy wanted to save it for the nation by acquiring it and housing a museum in it. This museum would tell the story of this most distinguished family, together with the story of the nineteenth century Bengal, a glorious chapter in our history, when this part of our country led the rest in every field of life and culture.

Another serious consideration that urged him to found a University at Jorasanko was the need, as he felt, for upgrading and standardizing the teaching of music in West Bengal. There are hundreds of institutions here which teach music in their own diverse ways, independent of one another. No uniformity of standard in teaching is maintained in them, and no supervision is excercised to enforce a minimum standard of efficiency. The Visva-Bharati could not help in the matter, since it is a residential University, and cannot, therefore, affiliate to it such institutions.

In fact, at a meeting called by him on 2nd April 1961 to discuss the basic ideas relating to the proposed University, it was this point that Dr Roy emphasized to justify the necessity of founding a separate University. To this meeting were invited distinguished men of letters and culture and Dr Roy explained: "At present there is no proper supervision of a large number of music institutions scattered over the State. One of the main functions of the new University would be to raise the standard of teaching of these institutions by prescribing a proper syllabus and granting them affiliation."

The pattern of teaching was also discussed in this meeting. Having regard to Rabindranath's observation that "every human being should master not only the language of the intellect but also the language of Art", Dr Roy pleaded that in the degree course of the new University subjects that come under the class of Fine Arts should also be made compulsory. This was a very unorthodox approach and only a man of bold imagination could venture on it.

Dr Roy was quite certain that this departure from the accepted practice would not in any way detract from the value of the degrees that would be conferred on the students of this proposed University. According to his ideal, these students should not only be given such general education as would make them equals to the graduates in Humanities of other

Universities but they would, in addition, be taught some other things which will make them the superior. To quote the words of Rabindranath, they would be additionally equipped with "a language of personality", which will help develop thier emotional side.

In a letter to the Chairman of the University Grants Commission he elaborated this point: "The teaching Department of the University would admit students whose academic attainment is of the same standard as of those who are admitted to the graduate course of other Universities. It is proposed to make provision for comprehensive training in various branches of music and fine arts, modern and classical, including provisions for literature and science with the idea of turning out graduates whose intellectual attainment would compare favourably with graduates in Humanities of other Universities".

The third reason was his profound admiration for Rabindranath's writings. He sent for me one day just after the establishment of the University in order to brief me on my new duties, and he impressed on me the need for deep and extensive research on Rabindranath's life and work.

This account will show that the idea of establishing a University after the name of Rabindranath in his ancestral house at Jorasanko was not conceived by Dr Roy casually, in an impulsive or a light mood. In fact it took shape in his mind slowly by the cumulative effects of many developments. When the idea struck him, he gave serious thoughts to it and consulted the opinions of eminent men in the field of culture, particularly of those who could speak with authority on the Tagore literature. With his characteristic thoroughness he not only planned for the University but also thought about the pattern of educational system which should be adopted by it. He dreamed of a University which should in all respects justify the unique privilege of being located in the ancestral house of Rabindranath and of being permitted to bear his name.

It is a pity that Dr B. C. Roy did not live long enough to see this institution functioning properly. Hardly had the University been set up two months when he was overtaken by sudden and unexpected death. By his death this infant institution has been deprived of the services of its greatest benefactor, even as the country has suffered irreparable loss.

Rabindra-Bharati University is one of the last gifts of Dr Roy to the people, and it is for them to appreciate its value and develop it.

HIRANMAY BANERJEE

Rabindra-Bharati University

A LETTER ON THE RABINDRA-BHARATI UNIVERSITY

This letter to Srimati Maitraye Devi, well-known for her deep appreciation of all that Tagore stands for, is interesting in that it reveals what Dr Roy had in mind with regard to the functions of the proposed Rabindra Bharati University. ED.

The 3rd April, 1961

DEAR MAITRAYE DEVI,

Thank you for your letter of 31st March.

Some of our friends who are interested in Rabindranath's teaching and philosophy met to discuss the subjects that should be included in our programme for the Tagore University.

I entirely agree with you that the memorial to Rabindranath should be to help us

(1) to understand "his thoughts, realize his profound wisdom and preach the same to humanity in need of sustenance".

(2) to achieve this object it is necessary to have "a full grasp of Tagore's ideas and to have a continuous training on the subject".

We discussed yesterday and came to the conclusion that the different aspects of Tagore's life could not be realized in the proper perspective unless we attempt to have a comprehensive view of the perfection of his understanding. It is, therefore, necessary to have a study group, a research centre, for the purpose of understanding and pursuing Rabindranath's philosophy, his treatise on sociology as reflected in his life's work. Obviously, the person who would be directing such research need not only be an "academician but also a person with keen imagination so that we are able to comprehend the totality of his views and the completeness of the individual."

The object of training persons in this type of work would be for spreading all over India and outside the "spirit of Tagore", and to carry the light of his wisdom and the warmth of his social work.

For the above purposes the University should invite persons with literary and philosophic understanding from different linguistic groups in India. His ideas on education, his method of instruction in his own school should be very carefully studied in order to find out the Poet through his work which included not merely his giving expression to the theories that built up his world of reality but also to study the history of his ideas regarding village uplift work, his approach to politics, national and international, and various other matters in which he was interested. It is only if the above purposes are pursued with determination that the memorial would be a fitting memorial to the great Poet.

I am preserving your letter for our guidance in future.

Yours sincerely
B. C. Roy

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The editor has desired me to give my personal reminiscences of Dr B. C. Roy, and as it had been my good fortune to come in close contact with him from time to time, I could recount events and anecdotes relating to him, but they would perhaps be too personal and intimate to be exposed to public view. Nevertheless, I would be happy to recall a few facts about him and a few occasions when I came in touch with him, and to pay my humble tributes to that great man with whom I had the privilege of personal relationship for a little less than thirty years.

The fame of Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy along with that of Sir Nilratan Sircar and Sir U. N. Brahmachari had spread early in this century, even to the distant corners of East Bengal, in one of which I stayed and had my schooling. But I did not have any occasion to meet Dr Roy till 1934, when on my return from U.K. I was taken to his house and introduced to him. Dr Roy was a great friend of my father-in-law, and as such, he started taking interest in my welfare. For months I used to meet him almost every evening and came to know him as a very great personality indeed.

Dr Roy's genius as a physician had become a legend in the country, and with countless others I also had the privilege of finding myself and some members of my family under his treatment at different times. He was no respecter of persons, and I can testify from my own experience that his kindness and affection were showered on great and small alike, as was evidenced by the trouble he had taken even for me and my people.

Thus, early in 1935 when my wife got unwell, on Dr Roy's advice, she was immediately brought to Calcutta so that he could personally treat her. During those days I saw him working as a doctor and as a close family friend. It was a pleasure to see the fine relationship between Sir Nilratan Sircar and Dr Roy. My wife passed away after a very short illness almost on the lap of Dr Roy. For months thereafter, I received solace and con-

solation from him. Some time later, a very young sister of mine had some kind of a throat infection and she was sent to me from our home in East Bengal for treatment. Dr Roy had a look at her, felt her throat, and prescribed three pills and an ointment. Within a day or two of the use of the medicines, my sister was completely cured. I also gratefully remember the medical attention he gave my father during his last days and the interest he took in my recovery even after my discharge from the Tropical School of Medicine, Calcutta, in 1953, when he arranged for me a consultation with Dr L. M. Banerjee and a restful stay at Shillong during convalescence. And again in 1957 when I suddenly fell ill, Dr Roy immediately sent a specialist to Kharagpur and I was removed to Calcutta for investigation. From then onwards he always enquired of my health and gave me advice as a friend and as a doctor. Such experience must be common to many who knew him personally.

One day a message came for me to see Dr Roy because of my specialized training in Civil Engineering. He thought that I should be the right person to give advice on a hydro-electric scheme in a certain Indian State, whose ruler happened to be his friend. I readily undertook the work, and in retrospect I consider this as one of the many instances of the great faith he had in the abilities of younger people. In this connection I had several consultations with him and after every meeting I was amazed by his grasp of engineering problems, and felt that if Dr Roy had been an engineer he would certainly not have risen less high in that profession than he had done in medicine, and that while India gained in him a great healer of men, she undoubtedly lost an engineer of international stature and eminence. That sixth sense with which he was instinct and which he brought to bear upon extremely difficult medical cases with great success would have served him equally well in dealing with intractable engineering problems. Indeed, one of the dam sites suggested by him proved later, on examination and investigation, to be the best site. I suggested a multi-purpose scheme but the cost was too high in terms of the standard then prevailing. The TVA had just then started being talked about and Dr Roy immediately welcomed the idea but the scheme could not be put through owing to financial reasons. To our regret, the preliminary work did not proceed further.

When I was a lecturer in the Bengal Engineering College, I was not feeling happy in my relations with my immediate superior and I was thinking of giving up the teaching profession altogether. I was very keen on accepting Dr Roy's suggestion to take up scientific agriculture on a large scale in a State outside Bengal. Preliminaries proceeded but the war intervened.

During the early years of the War, as the Senior Regional Inspector of the Technical Training Scheme under the Government of India, I was required by my superior in Simla to see Dr Roy, who was then the Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University. Before I brought my superior, Khan Bahadur Mustaque Ali Gurmani, who later became the Governor of West Punjab, to see Dr Roy for discussion, Dr Roy had wanted to know something of the details of the scheme. In order that we might get a fairly longish time for uninterrupted talk, he took me in his car as he was going on a professional call to Chandernagore and the trip gave me a very good opportunity to explain things to him. I was very happy not only at the course of discussion but also at his asides about his early personal life in England and in India—much of which has been related by Mr Thomas in his biography of Dr Roy. He spoke with great warmth and feeling of his late Principal at the Calcutta Medical College, Col Lukis. Not only Khan Bahadur Gurmani but I also was amazed by Dr Roy's grasp of details when Khan Bahadur discussed the technical training scheme with him.

Towards the end of the War I went to Delhi as an Officer in the Ministry of Education. At that time, there was a lot of criticism about the Overseas Scholarship Scheme of the Government of India and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad appointed Dr Roy as the Chairman of a Committee to advise the Government of India on the working of the Scheme. Although for administrative reasons I did not have the privilege of working as Dr Roy's Secretary on this Committee, I became quite familiar with his approach to the problem and the solutions that he proposed resulting in the Modified Overseas Scholarship Scheme.

Early in 1948 one day, the late Dr Syamaprasad Mookerjee sent for me to see him at his residence in New Delhi and asked me if I could agree to work on the proposed Damodar Valley Corporation as a nominee of the Government of West Bengal. Dr Mookerjee said that he had been asked

by Dr Roy to get my views. I am sure that it was because of the preliminary work that I did in connection with the contemplated hydro-electric scheme mentioned earlier. Even though I would have been very happy to serve, I was not enabled to undertake the work on the ground that my serving in such a capacity would probably be locking up technical manpower, which was needed by the Government very urgently.

At the instance of Dr Roy again, and much against the wishes of the late Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, I was recalled as the Principal of Bengal Engineering College to implement the development plan. It was a great pride to have Dr Roy to lay the foundation-stone of the new buildings of the Bengal Engineering College in December, 1949. I wanted to take advantage of Dr Roy's presence to get his approval of the plans for the hostel building. Several alternative plans had been drawn up by my erstwhile student and friend, Mr Habibur Rahaman, the Government Architect. Dr Roy remarked that by providing modern housing and amenities to our young students we were spoiling them. He said that there were places in which he was unable to get young engineers to serve because of the lack of amenities provided there and he thought that such reluctance was probably due to the kind of initial training they get at home and to the habits they form in college. In this Institute also, he was not enthusiastic about providing the students with comforts which, he thought, would spoil them and make them forget the extreme poverty of the country which they would be called upon to remove. He wanted the young engineers to realize that they have to work as pioneers and bring the modern amenities within the reach of the common man instead of themselves being steeped in luxury.

Early in March, 1954, I received a telephonic advice from the Government of India that in consultation with Dr Roy, who was the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, it had been decided that I should take over charge from the late Sir J. C. Ghosh as Director of this Institute to enable him to take up the Vice-Chancellorship of Calcutta University. From then till his passing away I had the privilege of frequently coming in contact with him in connection with the work of the Institute and also as one in whom he retained an affectionate interest to the last.

There had been many occasions—more than I would like to recall—when on behalf of the Institute or on my own behalf I made perhaps unreasonable requests and demands on Dr Roy's valuable time, but never did I find him lacking in patience to give me advice or to decide each case on its merits. In this period of intimate association, continuous for a number of years, in connection with the work of building this infant Institute, I had further opportunities to notice certain features of his character which deservedly made him an outstanding administrator of his time. His industry was phenomenal, his courage boundless, and so he was intolerant of sloth and ineptitude and impatient of men too timid to undertake responsibility. To a profound mastery of detail, he added a capacity to go straight into the heart of a problem and to give quick decisions ; to a profound knowledge of affairs and a shrewd, alert, practical sense, he added vision and a spirit of adventure. He had tremendous confidence in himself and he could have great confidence in others. What impressed me most was the boundless trust he reposed on those whom he considered trustworthy. It is true, his impatience of inefficiency and his love of hard work and intelligence made it difficult for his subordinates to impress him easily, but once he was impressed, he gave all his confidence and a surprising freedom of action to his men who could therefore work with all their heart, honestly and conscientiously, without fear of being let down, or even of interference. In the matter of loyalty indeed, he gave no less than he received. In short, but for his great insight into educational and administrative matters, his human approach, and his inspiring leadership, it would not have been possible to build up this Institute to its present stature in the course of a single decade. I can, therefore, with gratitude acknowledge him as the chief architect of this "Institution of National Importance."

But he was more than an administrator and a versatile leader of men : he was a full man. His great struggle all his life against material poverty and disease did not make him indifferent to the deep spiritual urges of life, nor did it sour him and make him develop a gloomy kill-joy outlook. His serious preoccupations did not dry his rich source of humour and his jokes and pleasantries had often been a great charm of his conversation and of his company. Those who came in touch with him must know how

spontaneous they were. During the first convocation of this Institute, the Prime Minister came here as the chief guest. After the Convocation, the Prime Minister, Dr. Roy, and I were driving to Kalaikunda in an open tourer with people on both sides of the road greeting Panditji all the way. As we had been getting into the car, the Prime Minister sportingly pointed to Dr Roy's *dhoti* and *chadar* and said, "Now Bidhan, when will you start dressing properly?" Dr Roy also replied with a smile, "Well Jawahar, how can I help it? That's how my people have always dressed." A few minutes later, Dr Roy took out his handkerchief from his pocket and it was blown away by a gust of wind. Both Panditji and I took out our to offer him. He took the Prime Minister's fine handkerchief, held it delicately between his thumb and forefinger for a second, and then looked at the Prime Minister with a roguish smile and said, "Made in Paris, I suppose." Panditji burst out laughing. Mr Thomas also gives a typical instance of his wit when, after he had decided not to be the governor of U.P., Gandhiji greeted him saying, "Well, Bidhan, now that you have resigned the governorship, I cannot address you as 'Your Excellency' any more," and he replied, "Never mind Gandhiji, I'll give you a better alternative to call me by. I am a 'Roy' and I am a good few inches taller than many: you may call me 'Your Royal Highness' instead".

He was indeed royal—there was no doubt about that; only he was royal in many ways and in more senses than one; and I am sure, I will not look upon his like again.

S. R. Sen Gupta

Indian Institute of Technology
Kharagpur

8

Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy had been connected with the National Council of Education since 1936, when he became an ordinary member of the Council. Because of his abiding interest in education, particularly in technical education, he felt attracted to the Council which had been serving very valiantly, in the face of almost insurmountable difficulties, the cause of technical education in this country.

When Sri Kiran Chandra Roy, an industrialist and a former student of the Jadavpur Engineering College, was the Secretary of the College, Dr Roy was attracted to him by his dynamic personality; and it was he who persuaded Dr Roy, in 1942, to serve on the Executive Committee of the National Council of Education, which was the Governing Body of the College. On the death, in 1942, of Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray, the then President of the Council, Dr Roy consented to being elected to the vacant office.

Certain significant developments took place in the period following the advent in the Council of Dr Roy, and these were not all merely fortuitous. In 1942, the Manufacturing Department was started in the College and, in 1944, the National Council decided to award the Bachelor's degree in Engineering. In the few years preceding Independence, the College, under the inspiring leadership of Dr Roy, made considerable headway. The degrees conferred by it came to be recognized by the Institution of Engineers, the University of Calcutta, the Union Public Service Commission and other authorities. With the transfer of power, the Central and the State Governments were approached and they came to the rescue of the institution with financial assistance. In spite of his multifarious activities in other fields, Dr Roy always found time for the Jadavpur College, and his interest in it continued ever to be very active. It was mainly due to the keen interest he displayed in this institution that people of standing

and eminence were attracted to it. The membership of the National Council of Education came to be recognized as important as any of its kind in this country. The admiration and natural reverence that Dr Roy had for the stalwarts who took part in the conception and creation of the National Council of Education established an enduring link between him and all those who belonged to it, whether as students or as teachers.

The development of the College was not easy and plainsailing, lacking as it did in physical resources and funds. A certain amount of boldness and taking some risks even were necessary if quick results were to be achieved. And Dr Roy certainly infused in the institution a sense of boldness and adventure. The deficit, with which the institution had been running, never really seemed to alarm him or cause him unnecessary worry. His personality, his vision and his devotion to the cause were perfectly attuned to the idealism and the spirit of dedication with which the students, the staff and the members of the National Council served the institution. Dr Roy was never the rather remote and titular head adorning the apex of an educational institution. Through the years of his connection with this institution he always cherished for it a warm corner in his heart. The head, which used to swarm with the figures of the State budget, managed, strange as it may seem, to remember, year after year, the comparatively insignificant figures of income and deficit of a College and a University. The Annual Convocation was an event ever looked forward to by him and, except on two occasions when he was ill, he never missed any.

The fruition of the efforts of the great founders of the National Council and the realization of their desire of establishing a University stirred him to the depths of his emotions. That he should be the presiding genius over the glorious occasion brought a sense of fulfilment not only to him but to all those who belong to the institution and worked with him under his guidance. He often referred to Jadavpur as "my University" and indeed so it was.

TRIGUNA SEN

Jadavpur University

9

To write about Dr B. C. Roy's contribution to Chittaranjan Seva-Sadan would be to write a history of this very well-known hospital, for he was intimately connected with it for as many as 36 years. From the very inception of this institution in 1926 till the very last days of his life, its welfare was close to his heart, and any difficulties relating to it were his utmost concern.

Throughout his long medical career Dr Roy was connected with the growth and development of several hospitals in West Bengal and elsewhere in India. And he always cherished the hope of establishing a model hospital for women and children, efficient in administration, up-to-date in methods of treatment, free from the entanglements of red-tapism and bureaucracy, and with a staff imbued with the spirit of service to humanity. He looked forward to setting up a hospital which would give true succour to the helpless and indigent women and children of our country.

Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das had founded a trust and dedicated to it all his properties for the welfare of women and children. Unfortunately, owing to his sudden death, it was not decided, during his lifetime, what material shape his idea of welfare should be given. After his death, the general idea was to open a women's college, but Dr Roy felt that a hospital for women and children would be more helpful. Under the inspiration of Mahatma Gandhi and the guidance of Dr Roy it was decided to establish a hospital for women and provide a training centre for nurses. An appeal was issued for this purpose, and the response was very good: contributions were promptly received from all parts of India. A sum of Rs 8 lakhs was collected, from which, after paying 2 lakhs to discharge certain debts, the hospital was opened on the 1st of Baisakh, 1333 (14 April, 1926) by Pandit Motilal Nehru.

The hospital was started with 23 beds, but Dr B. C. Roy as its Secre-

tary worked so hard with his enthusiasm and great organizing capacity, that by 1929 it had 100 beds.

In 1928 the outdoor department for patients was opened and the total number of patients treated in that year was 15,964. The great services to the public rendered by this hospital can be judged from the fact that in the year 1960 the number rose to 97,078.

From the very beginning medical advice was available free; nor was any charge made for medicines supplied. Two cabins were maintained at the very modest rate of rupees three and a half per day. In the year 1960, the total number of beds was 261 for women and 60 for children. Of these beds for women 168 were free and for the remaining 93 (including 13 cabins) a moderate charge was made.

To meet the hospital's ever increasing financial demands was Dr Roy's constant worry, and all he could do at that time to secure the necessary funds was to appeal to the public for generous help, for this country was then under foreign rule. Appealing to the public for help in 1928 Dr Roy said: "Swaraj will ever remain a dream unless the people are healthy and strong in mind and body. They cannot be so unless the mothers have the health and wisdom to look after the children properly. Will you not help in the regeneration of the nation by giving your mite?" Year after year he sent out similar appeals. Even though the public response was generous, to meet the ever increasing demands of this fast-growing institution was a major problem. Dr Roy was always optimistic and believed in the adage that where there is a will there is a way. He introduced what then was a novel idea of selling coupons on the Flag day of the Seva-Sadan, the 1st of Baisakh. These coupons carried the picture of Deshabandhu Chittaranjan in his eternal sleep with the following immortal lines, composed by Rabindranath Tagore, printed beneath:

এনেছিলে সাথে করে
মৃত্যুহীন প্রাণ,
মরণে তাহাই তুমি
করি গেলে দান।

You have offered through death
the eternal life that you brought forth.

For several years on this day coupons used to be sold at street corners, for he believed that contributions from the public, however small, regenerated the hard work put in by the Seva-Sadan workers, and such genuine appreciation made this enterprise all the more worthwhile. In order to raise money Dr Roy approached Mahatma Gandhi for help who addressed several public meetings in Calcutta. Meetings were also held at some of the well-known halls in the city, such as the Overtoun Hall, the Y.M.C.A., the Albert and the University Institute Halls. An entrance fee of 4 annas was charged from those who attended the lectures, and the entire proceeds were handed over to the Seva-Sadan. Dr Roy approached the Government for help for the first time when Sri Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, a member of the Governing Body of the hospital, was Finance Minister of Bengal.

During those years of 1926 and 1927, the *purdah* was still prevalent and widespread. Women were reluctant to go to hospital. Lack of confidence in modern treatment due to superstition and ignorance was common. But gradually, the hard work put in by Dr Roy and his team of workers began to be appreciated by the public, and the Seva-Sadan came to be recognized as a hospital where women could safely go and have proper treatment. Women and children of all classes and communities began to avail themselves of such facilities as were offered. They came, as they still come, from great distances, and at present the demand for admission is so great that arranging extra beds to accommodate urgent cases is an everyday matter.

At that time there was still much prejudice against the nursing profession, and it was considered low and degrading for women of middle class families to pursue such a career. Dr Roy was convinced that one of the primary requisites of a good hospital was efficient nursing, and so a centre for training women in nursing and social work was opened at the Seva-Sadan. And many women ignoring the prevailing prejudice started receiving training at this centre. Health instructions and first aid classes were also made available to some girls schools, and several schools in the area made full use of this opportunity. Lecturers on public health and hygiene and on child-care, illustrated with lantern slides, and first aid classes proved very popular. Women of the locality, where the Seva-Sadan is situated, and of the neighbouring areas soon became a centre of

knowledge and enlightenment. General classes for nurses were also held, for Dr Roy felt that some general education was necessary for nurses to be efficient in their profession. In 1927, only 15 nurses were trained; in 1960, as many as 131. Thus, this centre played a prominent part in making it possible for girls and women of middle class families to enter a noble profession and build up for them an independent and worthwhile career.

Initially, the Seva-Sadan had arrangements for treating only gynaecological and obstetrical patients. Other departments were gradually opened, as Dr Roy saw the need for treatment of other diseases.

The departments of Radiology and Hydrotherapy were opened in 1931, and the Sisu-Sadan, the department for children, was opened in 1936 with 36 free beds. Gradually other departments were added.

When cancer treatment was still in its infancy, Dr Roy introduced Radium Therapy in this connection. Thus, in this country, he was a pioneer in the field of Radium Therapy, for except in Bombay nowhere in India was this treatment available at that time. Till 1948, the treatment of cancer was conducted in the various departments of the Seva-Sadan, when Dr Roy felt that, since this disease was spreading, women as well as men should be given opportunity of exclusive and expert treatment. The Chittaranjan Cancer Hospital was inaugurated by Dr Roy himself, after he had become the Chief Minister of West Bengal.

To stimulate research and study in both the hospitals, the pathological department was greatly extended and well-equipped. Opportunities for research work and investigation were thus expedited. A museum of obstetrics, and gynaecological and cancer specimens is attached to the hospital. Along with the Chittaranjan Cancer Hospital was also opened the Sudhira Memorial Library, a reference library on medical books and journals, which has greatly helped the staff in research work.

To the great satisfaction of Dr B. C. Roy, Calcutta University recognized the opening of the Post-Graduate teaching department in D.G.O. from the year 1959. Chittaranjan Seva-Sadan was thus recognized as an affiliated Post-Graduate college. It now prepares students for the following examinations: D.G.O., D.M.C.W., D.C.H. and Public Health Nursing.

Dr Roy served as Secretary of the institution till 1947, when he became

the Chief Minister of West Bengal. In his last report as Secretary he wrote: "We have achieved a great deal, but as we get along, our ideals grow and our needs also equally grow. We are thankful to our donors and trust that they will continue to give us help and encouragement in the years to come to fulfil our aspiration to make the Seva-Sadan and the Sisu-Sadan in every respect an ideal hospital in this city."

How alert was Dr Roy's mind to adapt itself to emergencies may be seen from two instances in relation to the history of this hospital. During the second world war, when Calcutta was threatened with invasion, he promptly converted a part of the hospital into an A.R.P. casualty ward, helping the government with expert service and treatment, for he believed that by such efforts the civil population would be helped in times of need. In 1947, during the great Calcutta carnage, a large number of men, women and children in the surrounding areas of the Seva-Sadan were stranded. For over a month, 400 such distressed persons were provided with food and shelter in this hospital. A part of the hospital was immediately converted for receiving emergency cases, and over 300 seriously injured persons were treated.

Throughout these years, Dr Roy kept a close and constant watch over this institution. It gave him great pleasure and satisfaction when eminent personalities visited the institution; and, in spite of his multifarious work, he would show them round personally, relating to them in his inimitable manner interesting anecdotes and incidents.

He would often pay surprise visits to ensure that everybody was at his post and carrying on the allotted duty to the best of his ability. It was also not rare for him to come to this hospital at odd hours of night, perhaps on his way home after some private emergency call. He was a hard task-master and if he found any person indifferent to his duties he would be severely reprimanded. In the cause of suffering humanity, he made no difference between the rich and the poor, the known and the unknown, and his expert advice was readily available for the treatment of difficult cases. He gave full attention to the details of running this hospital; he would often pay a visit to the kitchen in order to see for himself that the food cooked there was clean, wholesome and palatable. At the beginning, the hospital maintained its own dairy to give the patients pure milk, but this was later

discontinued for reasons of economy.

While he expected full and honest service from the staff, in return he was ready to praise and encourage them when they so deserved. Even to this day many members of the staff, who have been with the institution since its early days, will readily acknowledge the close bonds of affection and loyalty which Dr Roy had for them in return for their services to the institution.

He tried to instil in the medical staff the spirit of service and self-sacrifice. He impressed upon them that to be an efficient doctor the qualities primarily necessary were honesty and hard work, and with them rewards would come automatically. He also impressed upon the young doctors the necessity of cultivating the quality of understanding the patients sympathetically and treating them accordingly .

Though the Seva-Sadan has lost in him its chief benefactor and and protector, it continues in spite of great odds to serve the distressed humanity and is a living embodiment of his cherished ideals.

BIBEK SEN GUPTA

Chittaranjan Seva-Sadan

10

Dr Bidhan Chandra was a great man and he achieved his greatness through continuous devotion to hard work ; he was a *Karmoyogin*. Work was to him the vital fluid that nourished and sustained him, and he could justly claim as he did: "I like work, it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours. I love to keep it by me and the idea of getting rid of it breaks my heart."

Bidhan Chandra's absorption in work was really a kind of offering himself to his country, his God. For about a decade and a half he, with his indomitable courage and steadfast determination, devoted all his energies to the great but frustrating task of solving the ills and multifarious problems of West Bengal. It is for the posterity alone to judge the extent and quality of his achievements, but that his efforts have been amply rewarding and that he has shown the right way to his successors are already beyond dispute. Jawaharlal Nehru rightly observed after his death: "It is difficult to realize that Bidhan Chandra is no more. He died in the fulness of years and achievements and yet was essentially a young man, full of energy and vigour and youthful enthusiasm. . . . A great man, a giant among men, has gone and left us sad and mourning."

Such was the man who was associated, from the very beginning, with what is now called the Kumud Sankar Ray Tuberculosis Hospital, and was the chief inspiration to all those who worked for it. Bidhan Chandra played a very significant role in the conception, planning and building up of this Hospital, and it would be interesting to recall how it came to be founded and has since grown to be perhaps the largest of its kind in the East.

The story goes back to 1914-15, when a young and wealthy medical student, Provash Chandra Ghosh, was under Dr Bidhan Chandra's treatment for tuberculosis. The treatment of this desease was then a frustrating

busines owing to limited resources and insufficient development of modern medicine. In Bengal there were no facilities anywhere for specialized treatment. Provash Chandra died in 1918, but he left, under Bidhan Chandra's advice and guidance, all his properties to a Board of Trustees for the purpose of establishing a tuberculosis hospital. The Board consisted of Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray, Dr Bidhan Chandra himself and Mr B. K. Ghosh.

On receiving the gift, Bidhan Chandra was soon busy making plans and formulating schemes for establishing the first tuberculosis hospital in Bengal. A small plot of land, a few miles south of Calcutta, at Jadavpur, was selected. It had the advantage of being well within the driving distance from the centre of the city, but at the same time outside the congested environments. Here, in 1923, was set up a nucleus of a hospital with only four beds, and the first patient admitted in it was in February 1924. The beginning was almost ridiculously small, but Bidhan Chandra persuaded the fellow-trustees to endorse this scheme as the funds they had then at their disposal were not enough for any bigger enterprise. His idea in thus beginning in a small way was to provide specialized training and experience in the treatment of tuberculosis, as well as to show the victims of this disease and their relations how treatment and care could be ensured at home.

Later, the Trustees formed a Society called the Calcutta Medical Aid and Research Society. Sir Nilratan Sircar was its first President and Dr K. S. Ray its Secretary. The most active person in the Society was, however, Bidhan Chandra with his indefatigable energy, and he found in Dr K. S. Ray the lieutenant he wanted. It was principally due to their joint efforts that the Hospital was laid on sound foundations and its rapid development assured. After Sir Nilratan's death, Bidhan Chandra was unanimously elected to the vacant office of the President, and in this capacity he continued to serve the Society, with great efficiency and success, till the very end of his life.

In the year 1929, this Hospital (then known as Chandra Mohan Ghosh Memorial Sanatorium) completed the treatment of its 100th patient, and Bidhan Chandra made this an occasion to make a fervent appeal to the people for their generous support and contributions for its expansion and development. The Hospital had already established, contrary to the notion

then held by many, that with proper care and treatment climatic conditions, such as temperature and humidity, did not appear to make any difference in the cure of tuberculosis. The time was therefore opportune for making this appeal.

It is but fitting to mention here that during the Hospital's early years of struggle and chronic want, Bidhan Chandra often helped the institution financially from his private funds, and thus saved it from some of its most difficult phases. Without such timely assistance it may not have been in existence now.

Bidhan Chandra used to say that with honesty of purpose and sincere efforts almost any obstacles, however insuperable they might appear at first, could be overcome. The history of this Hospital, which was, in 1950, named Kumud Sankar Ray Tuberculosis Hospital, in appreciation of the late Dr K. S. Ray's services to it, proves his conviction. It has now developed into one of the largest hospitals of its kind in the East, equipped with up-to-date facilities for diagnosis and treatment, and important research work is also being carried out in the B. C. Roy Research Institute, which was established in 1961 within the campus of the Hospital.

Mention must also be made here of the S. B. Roy Sanatorium in Kurseong. In the planning and development of this Sanatorium too Bidhan Chandra played as important a role as he did in the case of the Jadavpur Hospital. The late Rai Bahadur Shashibhusan Dey, a wealthy person, offered, for setting up a tuberculosis sanatorium in the hills, a few cottages on a piece of land in Kurseong. The matter was put in charge of Dr K. S. Ray who was Bidhan Chandra's right-hand man in all work connected with tuberculosis. Soon a small beginning with 20 beds was made. This has since grown steadily and has now a strength of 300 beds. Bidhan Chandra paid his last visit to this Sanatorium in 1960, when he presided over the ceremony of opening an annexe for the Railways with 60 beds.

Bidhan Chandra, who always emphasized the importance of research in every field of knowledge and learning, naturally also stressed the need for it in relation to tuberculosis control and treatment. He believed, many years ago, that tuberculosis should be completely curable after a period of hospitalization. This belief, which is now being increasingly translated into reality,

was then generally considered to be too optimistic and utopian. Then, he held that through research alone it should be possible to discover the real factors responsible for the wide prevalence of this disease in Bengal: whether it is due to some defecit in the usual food taken by the people of this region, or due to extreme humidity of the climate, or some other yet unknown factor or a combination of factors, such as would explain the far lesser incidence of this disease in the Uttar Pradesh or Bihar. He always encouraged the younger members of the medical profession to go deeply into these and similar other aspects of this disease. He even considered it necessary that some of the age-old popular beliefs and practices such as that a goat near a TB patient helps him towards recovery or that the juice of garlic is an antidote of TB germs—should first be scientifically investigated before discarding them as mere superstitions.

Bidhan Chandra's relations with only two very well-known hospitals, one at Jadavpur and the other at Kurseong, have been briefly described, and this reveals to some extent his deep and abiding interest in tuberculosis ; he has done so much in this field that even an attempt at giving a very sketchly idea of all his activities in this line cannot be made in a short article. It should, however, be mentioned here that, since he became the Chief Minister of West Bengal, several other tuberculosis hospitals with a total strength of about 4000 beds have been opened, and the development of the H. C. Mukherjee T. B. Rehabilitation Colony at Digha in Midnapore district also has been completed.

The Bengal Tuberculosis Association, of which he was the Chairman, also owes much of its achievements to his inspiration and guidance, and it is through his efforts that the Association received considerable financial help from the West Bengal Government. In a word, Bidhan Chandra's invaluable service to the cause of fighting and controlling the menace of tuberculosis in West Bengal will always be remembered with deep regard and gratitude.

N. N. Sen

Kumud Sankar Ray Tuberculosis Hospital

11

A SMALL but determined group of Bengalis, led by Dr R. G. Kar, were trying, in 1919, to establish in the north of Calcutta a non-official medical college on the national lines. Many of them thought that they had but small chance of being successful in their efforts, for the Government of the day did not like the idea of such a medical college, even though to allay their suspicion it was proposed that the institution should be named after Lord Carmichael, the then Governor General of India.

The University of Calcutta was willing to affiliate the institution to it as a college for undergraduate teaching in medicine only on the latter's fulfilling certain difficult conditions. One of the conditions was that the institution must have on its teaching staff men of outstanding qualifications with foreign degrees and certificates of post-graduate standards for imparting standardized teaching in medical subjects. This was a very discouraging term, difficult to fulfil, since those who had such high qualifications in any branch of medical science were drawn towards Government posts, which offered much better prospects than a growing institution, as yet not quite developed, could offer.

It was in a situation like this that eyes turned on a young and spirited teacher of anatomy in the Campbell Medical School (now Nilratan Sircar Medical College), who had returned from England with double successes, F.R.C.S. and M.R.C.P., both of London University, and joined the Bengal Medical Service a few months ago. He was, of course, none other than Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy. Would he agree to make the sacrifice of throwing up a covetous Government job and join the staff of this national institution? Dr Roy was approached and, to the pleasant surprise of those who had any doubts about it, he agreed most readily. He joined the institution as Professor of Medicine, and it was duly affiliated to Calcutta University as a medical college. And owing principally to Dr Roy's devoted

service to this college that it has developed so quickly and has now attained its present stature. This institution, now called the R. G. Kar Medical College, has now over 800 beds, while nearly a thousand patients are treated daily in its out-patients' department. It imparts teaching not merely in M.B.B.S. courses of Calcutta University, but also in post-graduate courses, including D.G.O., D.O.M.S., D.A., D.L.O., and D.M.R.D. & T.

Dr Roy was elected in 1942 to be the President of the Bengal Medical Education Society, which guides the policy of this College. Vital improvements of this institution, which included opening up of new departments for specialized study and medical treatment, were effected through Dr Roy's guidance and inspiration. Among such improvements were: the Biochemistry Department set up under Dr Harendra Kumar Mukherjee; the Cardiology Department under Dr Jiten Dutta and Dr Joges Gupta; the Bengal Immunity Block in Albert Victor Hospital, constructed out of the donations of the Bengal Immunity Ltd. for research work and treatment of patients by the products of the Bengal Immunity Ltd.; Sir Nilratan Sircar Research Institute opened to encourage post-graduate research work by the students and staff of the College; the students' hostel, a three-storied new building; Sri Kedarnath Maternity Hospital constructed out of the donations, amounting to Rs. 4,00,000 from Miss Mary Helena Mauger, Rs. 5,00,000 from the Calcutta Corporation and Rs. 30,000 from the Sir Surendranath memorial committee. Dr Roy helped immensely in collecting all this money to make these schemes possible.

Later, when he became Chief Minister of West Bengal, the kitchen block and the nurses' quarters were constructed at a cost of Rs. 7,00,000 from a contribution made by the Government of West Bengal.

It may be mentioned here that, in 1927, some difficulties were raised by the British Medical Council about their recognizing the M.B.B.S. degree conferred by Calcutta University, and it was Dr Roy who helped in tiding over these difficulties. Then, again, in 1930, there was some trouble regarding the recognition of this College as a teaching institution for non-fulfilment of some of the conditions imposed by the Indian Medical Council. Dr Roy as a member of the Indian Medical Council did everything in his power to get over the trouble.

Dr Roy's relations with the students and the staff of the College were

always very cordial. His illuminating lectures and clinical lessons were of a very high standard, and they were of immense help to the students at a time when modern equipments of teaching were not yet available in the College owing to its financial stringency. He used to spend a few hours every day in the ward, watching the condition of the patients and giving clinical instructions to the accompanying students. His very presence near a patient brought him relief from agony.

His guidance to the post-graduate training in India and abroad inspired many students to go in for higher medical education in India and to seek recognition as members in the highest academic bodies abroad. It should be mentioned here that to encourage meritorious students he made a donation of Rs. 40,000 for giving some annual scholarships in memory of his parents, Aghorekamini Debi and Prakas Chandra Roy.

As Chief Minister of West Bengal, Dr Roy's help to improve the financial position of this institution was immense, and that enabled it to meet some annual deficits, revise the pay scales of the subordinate and ministerial staff according to the Government standard, and also to give substantial financial benefits to the teaching staff.

To commemorate the occasion of his being elected the Chief Minister of West Bengal, the staff and the students of the R. G. Kar Medical College raised Rs. 10 lakhs for building a separate block to be called Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy Casualty Hospital. The Government of Bengal, we are happy to say, has undertaken to complete the scheme.

SURESH CHANDRA DUTTA

R. G. Kar Medical College

12

Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy was one of the very few men who are born to lead. In his profession he was an undisputed leader. The medical profession in any country can claim but a limited number with his intuition, aptitude and genius. Also, few were his equals in political and administrative leadership.

The political life of Bengal was dominated by Deshabandhu Chittaranjan when, early in the twenties, Dr Roy made his dramatic entry into it by defeating Sir Surendranath Banerjee in a historic contest. Ever since, his towering personality had been influencing in many ways the course of political events not only in Bengal but also in the rest of India.

The public career of Dr Roy had indeed started much earlier when, in 1916, he was elected a Fellow of Calcutta University, which provided him with an opportunity of obtaining an insight into the working and finances of a public institution, and a training ground for his future political career through participation in the fight for the autonomy of the University so boldly carried on by Sir Asutosh Mookerjee against the Government of Bengal. Impressed by the young physician's political talent and intellectual stature, Sir Asutosh persuaded Dr Roy to enter active politics by seeking election to the Bengal Legislative Council.

The constituency he chose and the support he received as an Independent candidate from Deshabandhu and his Swarajya Party brought him immediately into the limelight of Bengal politics.

In the Council he distinguished himself principally by his speeches on the budgets, his mastery of details, and marshalling of facts. He also delivered a number of speeches on questions that vitally concerned Calcutta University, vindicating its right to autonomy and better treatment regarding allocation of Government funds. He was elected Deputy Leader of the Swarajya Party in the Council after the passing away of Deshabandhu.

whose memorable victory in bringing about the fall of ministries in 1924 and 1925 was repeated by Dr Roy in 1927, when he successfully moved the motions that the Council had no confidence in the two ministers.

In recognition of his extraordinary abilities for organization, he was elected General Secretary of the Reception Committee of the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress in 1928. Much of the success of the session, from the organizational point of view, was, as evidenced by J. M. Sen Gupta, Chairman of the Reception Committee, due to Dr Roy.

The thirties drew Dr Roy into the inner circle of Congress politics. He was appointed a member of the Working Committee and he courted imprisonment during the Civil Disobedience Movement.

It was largely through his efforts, in 1934, that the Congress was persuaded to contest the elections to Legislatures, when the Civil Disobedience Movement had waned. In 1934 he was also elected President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee.

In the early forties, Dr Roy found himself at variance with the official Congress policy, and he devoted himself to constructive work in other spheres.

In 1947, he was persuaded to join politics again, when, at the request of Dr Syamaprasad Mookerjee, he agreed to contest the election to the West Bengal Legislative Assembly from the Registered Graduates Constituency, a seat previously held by Dr Mookerjee. Soon after his election, the Congress Legislature Party chose him its leader, and he was appointed Chief Minister of West Bengal—a position which he held from 23 January 1948 till his passing away on 1 July, 1962.

These fourteen years were the most trying yet the most glorious period of his life. West Bengal opened its book with a debit balance on every account—food, finance, law and order, and the heavy influx of refugees. It stands out as a great tribute to the constructive leadership of Dr Roy that the state has overcome most of the primary obstacles to progress and prosperity.

Dr Roy has laid the foundations of political and economic stability in West Bengal, and the greatest homage that we can pay to his memory is to build a better Bengal on the broad foundations he has laid.

P. C. SEN

APPENDIXES

My Early Struggles

I HAD no ambition in life. My only motto has been this: "Whatever thy hands findeth to do, do it with thy might."

My father told me, when I was still a student, that he would guide me only until I was 18. After that I would have to look after myself. When I took my B.A., getting honours in Mathematics in B course (Science) from Patna College, I was 18 years and 1 month. My father then asked me what I would like to do. Sir John Woodburn, who was then Lt. Governor, was in friendly terms with Reverend Pratap Chandra Majumdar, a well-known leader of the Brahmo Samaj. Sir John had told him that he would like to take on as deputy magistrates three bright young men from among the Brahmos on Reverend Majumdar's recommendation. I was offered one of these posts. When my father heard of it, he said that he had served the Government for 30 years and he would not like his sons, in fact anyone in the next three generations, to take up service under the Government. Then he asked me what my taste was. In reply to my father I said I had no particular taste.

I applied for admission both at Sibpur Engineering College and Calcutta Medical College. It was a sheer accident that the reply came from the Medical College at 10 a.m. when I sent up my fees by money order and got admitted there, whereas the reply from the Sibpur College came in the afternoon. Being a poor man's son it would have been financially advantageous for me to go to Sibpur where I would have got a scholarship to defray my educational expenses, but it is not in me to bother over choice but to accept whatever comes my way. I decided to stay in the Medical College where I had already paid my admission fees.

My career at the Medical College went on smoothly until the fifth year when I appeared at my final examination. About fifteen days before the examination I was standing at the main gate of the Medical College. It was about 10 a.m. I saw my Professor, Col. Peck, coming out in his brougham. This was in 1906 when in the northern part of the town of Calcutta the electric tramcar had just been introduced. A tramcar was then coming from the south as Professor Peck's coach was coming out. His driver possibly thought that he would be

From an account of an interview with a staff reporter of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*

able to take the turn before the tramcar came up or that, being an Englishman's driver, he need not stop for the tramcar. The result was that the tramcar dashed against the hindpart of the brougham and the spikes of the rear wheels were broken. Professor Peck got down, looked round for witnesses, evidently thinking that the accident was due to the fault of the driver of the tramcar. Seeing me standing there, he came up to me, inquired if I was a medical student, and on my answering in the affirmative he asked whether I would like to give evidence. "Of course I will", I replied. Col. Peck said, "Don't you think the accident was due to the fault of the driver of the tramcar?" I said, "No, I think it was your coachman's fault. He shouldn't have tried to take the turn when the tram was coming."

After five or six days of this incident and about eight days before my final M.B. examination, he met me on the corridor of the hospital. He told me, "Look, you are the boy who was standing at the time of the accident. I have brought a suit against the tramways for damages. Will you give evidence?" I replied, "Yes". Col. Peck asked, "Don't you think the tramcar driver was driving at 30 miles an hour?" I said, "No. I think your coachman was at fault." I added, "I will give evidence and I will tell what I have seen. I will speak the truth." Col. Peck went away in anger.

I did very well in my written examinations. My Principal was Col. Lukis. He was the inspirer of my life so far as my nationalism is concerned. You can see his picture still hung in my chamber where I examine patients. Col. Lukis asked me how I had done in my examinations. I replied that I had done quite well but I was afraid I might have failed in practical midwifery. On his asking the reason why, I narrated the incident with Col. Peck. He replied, "No, no Englishman can act like that." Actually what happened was that, when I entered the examination room for oral test in midwifery, Col. Peck, who was my examiner, shouted at me so furiously that I got no opportunity to speak. I could see Col. Peck putting down a big zero in the mark-sheet. Thereafter, on the day when the results were considered by the Syndicate, I went to Sir Nilratan Sircar who was a member of the Syndicate. He told me that I had got first class marks in all subjects but had failed in midwifery. Sir Nilratan was surprised. Then I told him the incident and said, "I am not surprised at the result knowing the human nature being what it is." I then met my Principal Col. Lukis. He was also similarly surprised to hear what had happened. Principal Lukis advised me to take the L.M.S. examinations which were to begin fifteen days later. I told him it was no use, because Col. Peck would remain the examiner. But Principal Lukis insisted that I should appear. At my L.M.S. examination nobody examined me in the oral as they knew me very well. When I appeared before Prof. Peck he shouted, "You are the same boy. You have failed." On my replying in the affirmaive he asked, "Who failed you?" I said,

"You Sir." "Why did you not come to me? I would have passed you," he remarked. "Being an examinee I did not like that I should go and see you", I replied. Col. Peck this time said, "I need not examine you. You have passed."

Within two years of my L.M.S. I took my M.D., possibly the shortest time after graduation in which anyone before me had taken it. I practised in Calcutta for two years and then started for England.

While studying in the Medical College I got a scholarship of Rs. 10 per month. Besides, during the winter I used to work as a nurse ; the system of nursing had not been introduced at that time. I used to work 12 hours a day to earn Rs. 8 and I used to perform all the duties of a nurse, giving the patient enema, attending to his bandages, washing the wounds, and other things. I earned thus about Rs. 200 during the winter. In this way I used to meet my educational expenses. Throughout my college career, I could not afford to buy medical books which were very costly. I used to borrow them from my friends and colleagues.

After passing out of the Medical College I practised for two years. When I started for England I had Rs. 1200 in my bank after paying for the passage. At this period my father was about to retire. His monthly income was only Rs. 400 and he did not expect to get more than Rs. 189 as pension after retirement. You will be surprised to hear that I lived in England for two years on that Rs. 1200. I had an ambition, you can rather call it a fancy, for studying for my M.R.C.P. and F.R.C.S. at St. Bartholomew Hospital. My tutor and guide, Col. Lukis advised me not to go in for the I.M.S. but to increase my knowledge by taking F.R.C.S. (Eng.) and M.R.C.P. On reaching London I called on the Dean for admission and told him that I would like to do the M.R.C.P. and F.R.C.S. in two years. The Dean replied: "Roy, you are very ambitious. It sounds impossible. I cannot take you in." I replied: "It is better to try and fail than never to try at all." But the Dean did not agree with me. He said: "No, I am sorry."

I do not know what took possession of me. I was determined to get admitted into this hospital. I told Dr Shore that before leaving India I had decided to join St. Barts. I was not prepared to go elsewhere. I saw him as many as thirty times. Each time I got the same negative reply. The Dean used to put me off by referring me to other hospitals, but I had the determination that I had come here and should get myself admitted into this hospital. Then, one day he surprised me by agreeing to take me in and asked me to deposit my admission fees. I was happy and morose at the same time, because the admission fees amounted to 40 guineas. With a trepidation of heart I asked him if I could pay it quarterly. He agreed and asked me to bring 10 guineas next day. I did so and was admitted.

After some time I thought I should practise dissection. It was the summer

vacation. The dissection room was practically empty. I asked the taxidermist to give me a dead body for dissection. Everyday from 9-30 a.m. to 4-30 p.m. I continued to dissect. I was not worried to break for lunch as I could not afford it. After the dissections were completed I asked the taxidermist what I would have to pay for the dead body. He charged 12 guineas. I was flabbergasted. In Calcutta we paid Rs. 6 for a dead body. So next day I went to my Professor Dr Addison (later Lord Addison who became a Cabinet Minister). Dr Addison stared at me and told me that I need not pay anything. I was surprised. I thought that possibly he had taken pity on me, seeing my clothes, worn and frayed at the edges. I told him that I could pay something. Then he replied: "Why are you taking it in that light? You came to the Dean for many days asking for admission. I am on the selection committee. Except myself and another, all the others on that committee are retired I.M.S. and I.C.S. officers from India. They do not like to take in any boy from India, particularly from Bengal, which was in the grip of anti-partition movement and more so after the murder committed by Dhingra. But the Dean used to come and tell us every time about you. I told him. 'Why don't you give him a chance? That fellow seems to be very eager?' I said this although I did not know you. Therefore, you were taken in and it was my duty to see what you were doing. After you had dissected I used to look at the body and I was satisfied that the parts you had dissected were good enough for demonstration to the students. If a demonstrator dissects we don't charge him for the dead body. Since I can use your dissection for demonstration you have saved us the trouble and therefore I do not want to take anything from you."

After ten or fifteen days I came to the Dean to pay my fees for the next quarter. The Dean said, "Roy, I have decided not to charge you any fees. You can stay in this hospital as long as you like and you don't have to pay anything for that." I gasped. Here was a man who had persistently refused to take me in, why should he now change and offer to let me study without fees? Was it because he thought I looked poor? I told Dr Shore that I could pay the fees. He replied that he was keeping a watch on my work. "I know you are working in the skin department. The Professor had reported that your work was satisfactory." Dr Shore said, "We have to pay sixty pounds a year to the assistants in the skin department. By your work the hospital has been saved of that amount. Therefore, you need not pay."

When I got my M.R.C.P. and F.R.C.S. I went to see the Dean. He said, "Roy, I am really ashamed of my conduct towards you at the beginning. Another Bengali boy took 11 years to pass L.R.C.P. and I thought that boys from Bengal would be no good, they would only bring discredit to the institution. I can tell you now that no English student could have passed M.R.C.P. and F.R.C.S. in two years. So long as I remain a Dean I shall admit in this college everybody

you will send to me with a chit." I sent out about 14 or 15 Bengali doctors for admission into that hospital, among whom were many prominent surgeons of India.

My days in England were not free from financial stringency. I lived on Rs. 50 a week. I did not have the money to pay for my lunch. I used to come to the hospital from a distance of nearly six miles. When I availed myself of public transport on my way back home from the hospital I could not pay for my evening tea and had to go without it. When my money dwindled I used to work as locum tenens in hospitals when doctors went on leave and earned four to five pounds to replenish my resources.

When I returned to India via Colombo, after paying my travelling expenses up to Calcutta, travelling by third class, I had only Rs. 15 left with me. In Madras out of that amount I gave a loan of Rs. 10 to a fellow-passenger who went to Rangoon. I never got back the money. When I alighted from the train at Howrah station I was left with only Rs. 5 in my pocket.

1955 From the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 1 July 1955

The Civic Testament of Deshabandhu

I HAVE to thank you heartily for the great honour you have conferred on me today. Somehow or other I cannot dissociate myself from the great cause which I represent. I take this honour given not to me personally but to that great cause which I have always represented. After all, what is that great cause? If you leave out the details of work, sometimes in this and sometimes in that, the great work which I have undertaken for the last ten or fifteen years is the building up of a Pan-Indian people, consisting of diverse communities with diverse interests but united and federated as a nation. In this Corporation, I find plenty of work possible in that direction. So far as it lies in me, you will find that no communal interest will be sacrificed unless that interest goes against the well-being of the whole community by which I mean the Indian people or the citizens of Calcutta in this particular respect.

It is necessary—although I am in such poor health that I find it difficult to speak—it is necessary to remove some of the misapprehensions which have been expressed in newspapers about the Congress party capturing the Corporation. I really do not understand what is meant by capturing the Corporation. People have stood as candidates, and ratepayers have voted for them, and they have come here in the same right as those who do not represent the Congress. Here we find gentlemen who represent the Congress and gentlemen who do not represent the Congress. But what is the apprehension? I really cannot understand it. It has been said that this Corporation is going to be anti-Government. Well, I will place before you some of the important details of work which it will be my privilege to place before this Corporation. I leave it to you to judge if by carrying out that programme you do in any way go against the Government. I find nothing in that programme which goes against the Government in any way, against any Government which seeks the welfare of the citizens of Calcutta.

May I point out to you that it is not the policy—when I say it is not the policy, I mean it is not the policy if it accepts my advice—to offer any obstruction. My policy here will be to direct you to carry out constructive work. We are here not to destroy the Corporation but to carry it on on improved lines for the welfare of the citizens of Calcutta. We are not here to enter into a

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Address delivered by Deshabandhu Chittaranjan on his being elected the first Mayor of the Corporation of Calcutta on 16 April 1924.

conflict with the Government, but it is as well to say that if any conflict is forced upon this Corporation by the attitude of the Government, this Corporation will not be slow to engage itself in that conflict and to vindicate its duty to the citizens of Calcutta.

It has been said that this Corporation is going to be anti-European. I laughed to myself when I read this criticism. How is it possible for this Corporation to be anti-European except in the sense that to be pro-Indian is to be anti-European? That, of course, is a view in which no Indian Corporation can share. It is said that the European part of the city will be neglected. I am sure, the gentlemen present here will not accept that view. But at the same time, let me tell you that the development of any one part or locality of the city will not be allowed, if it means the sacrifice of every other part of the city. If that is anti-European, I am afraid, this Corporation may have to plead guilty to the charge.

With these two observations I propose to read out to you the different items of work upon which I shall advise the Corporation to enter. All this is so far as the Act and circumstances will allow:

1. Free primary education;
2. Free medical relief for the poor;
3. Purer and cheaper food and milk supply;
4. Better supply of filtered and unfiltered water;
5. Better sanitation in *bustees* and congested areas;
6. Housing of the poor;
7. Development of suburban areas;
8. Improved transport facilities; and
9. Greater efficiency of administration at a cheaper cost.

When I put down this programme, it occurred to me that it was easier to put down the items on a piece of paper than to carry out. The task before this Corporation is difficult. It is not impossible. I do not for a moment suggest that we shall be able to accomplish all that in the course of the next three years, but what I desire is that the Corporation should sincerely embark on this work, and if we can proceed a little way in advance I should think that we shall have accomplished a great deal.

It is the great ideal of the Indian people that they regard the poor as *Daridra Nārāyana*. To them, God comes in the shape of the poor and the service of the poor is the service of God to the Indian mind. I shall, therefore, try to direct your activities to the service of the poor and you will have seen that in the programme which I have drawn up most of the items deal with the poor—the housing of the poor, free primary education and free medical relief—these are all blessings for the poor, and if the Corporation succeeds even to a very limited extent in this work it will have justified its existence.

16 April 1924

The Dream of Deshabandhu

In the course of more than one speech in the Bengal Legislative Council in the twenties, Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy, while discussing many problems of national importance, public health for example, refers (pp. 134-35 ; pp. 143-44 ; p. 198) to a scheme prepared by Deshabandhu Chittaranjan—a scheme, as Dr Roy observes, "I had the honour of working out partly", for nation-building in general and reconstruction of the rural areas in particular. A background of this scheme is being given in what follows:

In the wake of Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo, Deshabandhu Chittaranjan emphasized the importance of rural reorganization –at a time when the attention of our political leaders was rivetted mainly on constitutional reforms. Chittaranjan Das devoted a good portion of his long address as President of the Bengal Provincial Conference in April 1917 to an elaboration of the deplorable condition of our villages and to a scheme for their improvement.

Not until some years later, however, when Mahatma Gandhi launched the Non-Co-Operation Movement, that village reconstruction received due emphasis in the national programme of work.

In the 1923 election, Deshabandhu entered the Council with the avowed object of obstructing its working, yet he was not, with a view to ameliorating the condition of the masses, averse to co-operating with the Government in certain spheres. Speaking on the Budget for 1924-25 of the Government of Bengal, Deshabandhu said in the Bengal Legislative Council:

"If I rise on the last day of this debate it is not to inflict a long speech on this House but to make a few observations in self-defence and to make a constructive suggestion. Sir, it has been said that I am the high priest of destruction in Indian politics. This criticism may delude those who are fond of copy-book maxims of morality. But I feel sure it will not appeal to those who are in the habit of dealing with living principles and questions of life. I ask my critics to point out one single instance where there has been any real constructive work without some destruction somewhere. If I am destructive, it is because I want to construct. If I am a non-co-operator, I can assure my friends, it is because I believe in co-operation, and I believe that no co-operation is possible in this country unless you start with non-co-operation. Is co-operation possible between masters and slaves? What kind of co-operation—may I ask—do you

expect between masters and slaves? My friend, Mr P. C. Mitter, has always been a stout champion of co-operation, but what did we hear from him the other day? He said that all the time that he was seeking co-operation—of course he was speaking as a co-operator—his voice was not heard and he was crying in the wilderness. Well, I do not know whether he realized this fact then but whether he did or whether he did not he has certainly given expression to what is true of this so-called co-operation. Can we co-operate when our rights are disregarded? It is abundantly clear that if the Government really desires the co-operation of the people (*hear, hear*), they must respond to the wishes of the people. We are not prepared to co-operate where our rights are disregarded and when our finances are played with in the manner it has been done for the last 160 years.

"Now, Sir, I tremble to make a constructive suggestion. I find the same policy is pursued even today—the policy of mistrust. We are charged with mistrust in the Government, but my answer is—it is because the Government has always mistrusted the people. Was it not pointed out by Mr Surendranath Banerjee (as he then was) that the history of Anglo-Indian Administration is strewn with fragments of broken pledges? Since the declaration—that memorable declaration of 1857, I refer to the Queen's Proclamation, down to the Reforms Act—for our part, the history of the Anglo-Indian administration has been the history of dead hopes and crushed aspirations, and yet we are asked to co-operate with the Government. What about the budget speech to which we listened the other day? We are told that there was a surplus—I am speaking from memory—of a crore and twenty-four or twenty-five lakhs from the new taxes. Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy pointed out that the Government is promise-bound to spend that for the transferred departments. He pointed out promise after promise—the promise of His Excellency the Governor, the promise of those who come under him—but that promise has been wholly broken and the other day we were told that this surplus was reserved for something else. Sir, I put a constructive suggestion before the Government for the last time. Now, out of this one crore and twenty-four thousand—(A voice: 24 lakhs)—I cannot think of crores and lakhs—why not out of this, if you want to waste, waste two-thirds of it, leave one-third for the transferred departments? Surely, this is a modest request. Borrow Rs. 5 crores at 6 per cent. interest and arrange for a sinking fund at 2½ per cent. I think I have worked it out in this way: if you spend 13½ lakhs for sinking fund charges and 30 lakhs to pay the interest you will clear the whole debt in 20 years. With 5 crores for nation-building purposes you can do a great deal. Spend one crore for technical education in Bengal, spend one crore for primary education, spend 30 lakhs for special Muhammadan educational institutions (*hear, hear*), spend 30 lakhs for those who are called the depressed classes—I do not believe that they are depressed

classes—they are oppressed classes (*hear, hear*)—oppressed by the Government and the higher classes alike; spend one crore for the development of cottage industries, spend one crore for weeding out malaria and kala-azar and spend 40 lakhs for the development of agriculture—you can do all this with five crores without any special efforts if you borrow it at 6 per cent and spend one-third of the sum—the whole of which you are promise-bound to spend—towards the transferred departments, and one-third to pay the interest and one-third towards the sinking fund charges, and I am sure you can better the condition of the people in this province. But will this be done? I, for one, hardly hope it will be done. I speak bitterly because we feel that our case is a case of lost opportunities, broken promises and neglected interests. I make this constructive suggestion for the last time and I want to see how the Government deals with it. You are always referring to the nation-building departments. I have often been told—"Why, you have got responsible Government, the nation-building departments," but these so-called nation-building departments were instituted to be starved, the nation-building departments which are put forward as a pretence of self-government—the nation-building departments which were never at any time intended to be worked in the spirit of the Reforms Act. If you are sincere—are you sincere?—I make this constructive suggestion. Let us see how you deal with it."

While representatives of the Government paid lip-service to the scheme, and even suggested that they were working it, it was, in the words of Dr Roy, 'mutilated beyond recognition'. The main proposals underlying that scheme were:

"That a certain sum of money should be funded and earmarked for specific purposes, and that different amounts are to be allotted for the different heads and they should be administered as a Trust Fund. They should be given over to a Board of Trust like the Calcutta Improvement Trust, and, secondly, *pari passu* with this allocation of funds, local authorities should be constituted which will be charged with the responsibility of administering the revenues allocated to them by the Central Board of Trustees, who shall exercise a general supervision over the local units."

The cause was so near to Deshabandhu's heart that when he could not persuade the Government to accept his scheme, he made, in August 1924, 'An Appeal to the Country':

"In order to crown with success the fight that is being carried against the Government it is absolutely necessary to take up the constructive work in right earnest. The Charkha must work and the Khadder must be made popular. The National schools are in a dying condition; they must be revived. Moreover efficient means must be devised to remove the deep poverty that is weakening and emasculating the whole nation.

"The Calcutta Corporation will open primary and technical schools, and proper arrangements will be made to ensure that the public get pure and unadulterated food at a cheap price. Thus the problem of local poverty may to a certain extent be solved. But Bengal in her vastness lies chiefly outside Calcutta. The whole of Bengal contains no less than 1,50,000 villages. Unless constructive work is begun in villages no effort will yield in permanent results.

"It is not possible to start work all at once in every village. But to begin with at least 100 villages in every district must be taken up. A centre should be organized with 4 or 5 villages. At these organized centres the national work mentioned before should be carried out. At every centre necessaries must be supplied at a cheap rate and arrangements should be made so that the local industries and agricultural products may be disposed of quickly and profitably; and the wealth of the villages within the centre has to be increased by the improvement of agriculture and industry by the application of suitable and appropriate modern methods. When work is begun in this manner the Charkha and the Khaddar will come to stay, national education will be placed on a sound basis, good drinking water will become available and malaria and kala-azar will disappear. Very soon poverty-stricken Bengal will know what is peace and prosperity. This is the real foundation of Swaraj.

"For a long time I have kept prepared a detailed scheme of this great work. It was not published earlier, for the right time to do so did not come. Now the time has come. In a year the movement of non violent non co-operation has passed over the country like a flood having richly fertilized the field for national work. But just after this great movement the people became perplexed and did not know what course of action, what ideal they should follow, and thus no real work could begin. Today Bengal has realized that the national effort must be extended in all directions. So I say that the time has come and there should not be any more delay.

"I have already said that work must begin at least in 100 villages in every district. Every district requires at least 20 workers. Unless every worker is paid at least Rs. 20 a month it will not be possible for him to maintain himself however willing he may be to undergo all sorts of hardships. Many volunteers will come forth from the villages at every centre. In order to guide these volunteers and to work out this special programme referred to above, these workers will have to be appointed. In this manner about 600 workers will have to be appointed in the whole of Bengal. For them at least Rs. 12,000 a month is necessary. Some amount for initial expenses must be paid to every centre. At the lowest estimate Rs. 5000 will be required for the initial expenses in all the centres in a district. If we can pay this sum, the organized villagers will voluntarily raise whatever else will be required. For this vast work, a sum of at least Rs. 1,50,000 is required. It is not necessary now to give a detailed

statement of all necessary expenses. We must raise Rs. 2,000,00 at a time and Rs. 20,000 monthly.

"To carry out this work is the mission of my life. I pray for some contribution from every person. What you can contribute without any personal hardship will be quite enough. With folded hands I appeal to those who have faith in me and who support my plan of action to pay now whatever they can in one lot and to make monthly contribution and thus fill the Swadesh Bhandar and help this vast and noble work. I can declare with confidence that within five years there will be an all-round change and the condition of Bengal will vastly improve."

Deshabandhu did not live long enough after issuing this appeal to make a success of the scheme. Twenty-five years later, Free India embarked on the reconstruction of villages and nation-building on an unprecedented scale, and Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy had the satisfaction of putting into effect some of the ideas he had assisted his leader in formulating and realizing what he had termed as 'Deshabandhu's Dream'.